

# Chapter 9

## *Recession and recovery*

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Following the tumultuous nineteen-seventies that heralded my giant step into the unknown, we wondered what the next decade would bring. While visiting Monica's parents in Broad Lane, Coventry, for the 1980 New Year's holiday, we made the appropriate toast. Later during the week, we went to see our long standing friends, David and Susan Cross; and also Roger and Susan Moore with their son, Stephen (then nearly four years old), and our goddaughter, Lindsey, soon to reach two years of age. This was the first time we had met Lindsey and were delighted with this little bundle of joy.

After returning home, we readjusted to the seasonal winter weather and, as January was experiencing heavy snowfalls, we continued to enjoy our cross-country skiing outings. The cold weather also provided me with an opportunity to improve my Quadraphonic sound system. The amplifier was finally connected to the apartment building's cable feed for FM stereo radio reception and we could now listen to more than one station instead of just the local provider, CKNX, received through the external dipole antenna attached to the wall. By simply supporting the four loudspeakers off the floor the sound reproduction was greatly improved. I decided to buy some metal brackets and screwed them to the wall, then placed the loudspeakers on them. By this time the hi-fi equipment included a Panasonic turntable and Radio Shack cassette tape player to augment the York radio amplifier.

February was a brutal month for deep freeze weather conditions, but this only encouraged us to look forward to evenings out on the curling rink as the extreme cold kept the ice at a constant temperature. Together with chess club activities, we were busy throughout the week.

Things became more springlike as March progressed, and the usual run of the maple sap was right on time. We made a trip to Maple Keys Sugar Bush, a small conservation area near Molesworth, Ontario. Until recently this was a site of commercial maple syrup production, but became a recreational trail with interpretive stopoffs. The trail led to a plantation of large, old maple trees each tapped with a spigot on which hung a metal bucket. Also on the trail was a reproduction of an Indian hut made of tree branches, and an iron cauldron suspended over a burning camp fire that demonstrated the pioneer method of making maple syrup.

### *A touch of the exotic*

Resulting from a hidden motivation we decided to embark on an exotic spring vacation. The glossy brochures had been available for a while and we thumbed through those that focused on package trips to Hawaii. We chose one particular tour based on cost and island-hopping schedules, and eagerly looked forward to the Wardair flight from Toronto International Airport to Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, on March 30th, 1980. We took off on time and during the nonstop flight we were able to see the landscape unfold below. Our flight path took just north of Goderich, and ice floes were plainly seen on Lake Huron.

The Rocky Mountains; Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the rugged Californian coastline passed by; then we sighted the island of Oahu and circled Honolulu with its famed Waikiki Beach before making landfall.

We were met by the tour operator's representative, received the customary *aloha* greeting of having a *lei* (garland of flowers) placed around our necks, and taken by bus to our hotel. The high rise hotel was not quite on the beach road (Kalakaua Avenue), but from our *lanai* (balcony) we had a reasonable view of the ocean and could clearly see the Diamond Head National Monument extinct volcano. We settled in then attended an orientation session where we could make reservations on any of the various tours and attractions that were a staple part of the island's lucrative tourist industry. We decided on organised events such as a Polynesian review show, harbour dinner cruise and a traditional Hawaiian feast called a *luau*. We also considered independent trips using a rented car and public transportation.

The following two days were based in Honolulu, at one time joining a group to visit "Hilo Hattie", a well known garment store. Here you could find a huge assortment of fashionable Hawaiian clothing; particularly tropical shirts for men, and the unusual, but practical, women's full-length dress called a *muumuu*. Monica bought an orange *muumuu* with a chrysanthemum design, and I bought a matching tropical shirt and another in blue with bold hibiscus motifs. The ultra-lightweight material was ideal for the Hawaiian climate.

As the hotel was only a stone's throw away from Waikiki Beach, we strolled along the oceanfront promenade watching the bathers and sun worshippers. Adjoining Waikiki Beach is Prince Kuhio Beach Park and we were amused with the antics of boys and youths attempting to surf on the waves that were rolling in. None of the lads had anything remotely like a surfboard, but relied on makeshift platforms – some as absurd as restaurant serving trays – to balance on while negotiating the billows.

There was a whole host of evening entertainment to choose from; including the "Don Ho Show", a well known cabaret. But it was not our scene and, in any case, we had tickets for the Polynesian Revue show. The event was set in a nightclub atmosphere, where we were lucky to sit almost in front row seats and were thoroughly enthralled by the entertainers who, to the strains of tribal music, performed on the stage. There were examples of Tahitian, Fijian and other Polynesian island native dances. Colourful costumes and graceful movements being characteristic of the routines. Conversely, the savage and aggressive movements of the male Maori warrior *haka* war dance were meant to instil fear in their opponents. Another act with a difference was the fire-eater. This native performer was able to inhale and exhale flames as well as balancing blazing coals on the soles of his feet.

Local sightseeing continued on the next day and we progressed through downtown Honolulu to look at various attractions such as the statue of King Kamehameha and the adjoining Iolani Palace State Monument. Further up the surrounding hillside was the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific; otherwise known as the Punchbowl. The cemetery contained the remains of those who had died fighting in the Second World War Pacific Theatre and, near the graves, there was a colonnade of murals depicting the engagements. A magnificent view of Honolulu could be seen from the path on the rim of this extinct volcano. Light rain – known locally as "liquid sunshine" – was falling over Waikiki Beach and the shower was accompanied with a complete rainbow that spanned the bay.





*At Home with Stephen, Roger and Lindsey Moore, Allesley Village, England, January, 1980.*



*Monica and Susan Cuddle our Goddaughter, Lindsey, Allesley Village, England, January, 1980.*



*Barry Adds Brackets for the Loudspeakers to Improve the H-Fi System, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1980.*



*Monica Takes a Break at Sully's Cabin on the Naftel's Creek Ski Trails, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1980.*



*Monica Delivers her Rock During a Curling Game, Maitland C.C., Goderich, Ontario, February, 1980.*

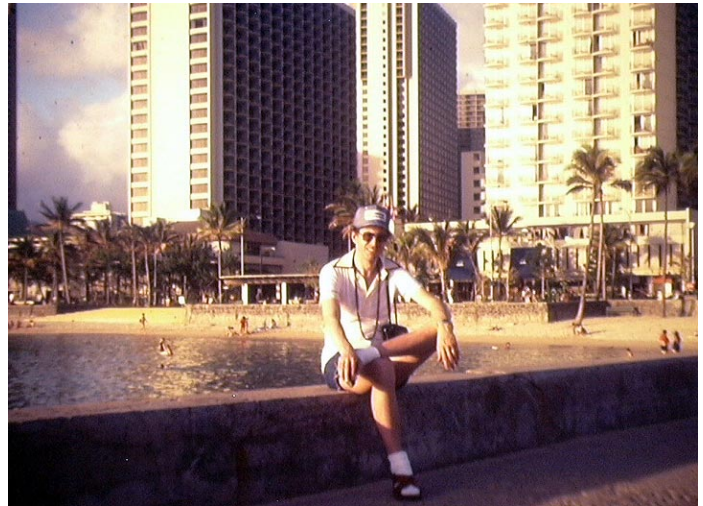


*Monica Inspects a Traditional Maple Sap Bucket at Maple Keys, Molesworth, Ontario, February, 1980.*





*Monica on the Hotel Lanai Overlooking the Ocean and Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii, March, 1980.*



*Barry on Prince Kuhio Beach Next to Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, March, 1980.*



*Performers at the Polynesian Revue Cabaret Show, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, March, 1980.*



*View of Hanauma Bay in Koko Head Regional Park, Windward Oahu Coast, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Byodo-in Japanese Buddhist Temple on Windward Oahu Coast, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Barry Tolls the Byodo-in Japanese Buddhist Temple Bell, Windward Oahu Coast, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



Evening dinner cruises around Honolulu Harbor are popular excursions and, because of the unlimited amount of alcohol served on board, are sometimes referred to as ‘booze cruises’. The type of craft that we set sail on was a motor-driven catamaran disguised to look like a native outrigger canoe. After dinner, the boat’s fo’c’sle was cleared to make room for a dance floor and the bar was opened for those who wanted to imbibe. A small combo struck up typical Hawaiian steel guitar music and, as dusk descended, coloured lightbulbs and Chinese lanterns strung from poles illuminated the boat’s profile. In the distance we could make out the silhouette and glowing clock of the Aloha Tower, the welcoming landmark to all sailors entering Honolulu Harbor. As the evening progressed and the alcohol flowed, the passengers became quite merry. To encourage a party atmosphere, the MC organised a limbo competition in which participants had to pass under a suspended bamboo bar without touching it. The bamboo bar was lowered in stages to make the movement more challenging. By this time, I was definitely ‘under the influence’ and attempted one of the limbo moves. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful and managed to look somewhat ridiculous as I sprawled onto the deck; my nice white slacks suffering an indignity when I landed on my *derrière*!

The rest of our time on Oahu was spent exploring as much of the island as possible. We rented a small car (an early Honda Civic that had seen better days) and drove to the windward side of Oahu. A local saying has it that you have never driven in Oahu until you’ve run over a mongoose. Mongooses were introduced on the island as a way of controlling rats in the sugar cane plantations. Unfortunately, this idea didn’t work and the mongoose population flourished. It wasn’t long before I detected a brown shape dart across in front of me and then felt the bump signifying a mongoose road kill. I was now ‘official’.

One of the first major landmarks seen when approaching the island of Oahu is the cone of the extinct volcano known as Diamond Head, which is now a National Monument. The road skirts the base of the small mountain (elevation 760 ft. [232 m]) to its junction with state road No. 72 and the scenic route to the promontory of Koko Head. After entering Koko Head Regional Park, the vista opens up onto Hanauma Bay, a circular cove that’s popular with snorkel skin divers. From a vantage point above the cove and beach, we could make out the many divers and coral reefs in the crystal clear water. The coastal road rounded the point and continued inland before eventually meeting state road No. 83 and our next destination – the Japanese Buddhist *Byodo-in* temple. We approached the temple along a forested, winding side road and, almost immediately, the trees parted to reveal the entire temple structure nestled in a verdant valley. Built in the classical Japanese style, the sweeping, curved and tiled roofs were supported on wooden pillars and resonated with symbolism. Inside the holy chamber was a huge statue of Buddha completely covered in gold leaf, and outside was the temple’s giant bell that I simulated striking with the large wooden hammer.

State road No. 83 – now also known as the Kamehameha Highway – continued to hug the windward coast with the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Koolau Mountain Range on the other. Lush, tropical vistas opened up at every turn in the road, and there were unique sights out at sea, such as the aptly named “China-man’s Hat” Mokolii Island. Before the road turned the northern point of Oahu, we made a brief stop at the community of Laie. The main tourist attraction here was the Polynesian Cultural Center, which was part of the nearby Brigham Young University, a Mormon institution. The Center offered a unique insight into the differences found within Polynesia, but because of the extensive interpretive programme, we decided to return later.



The north Oahu coastline is famed for its high waves, and we could see a great deal of surfing activity as we progressed past Waimea Bay. Kamehameha Highway became state road No. 99 as it turned inland towards Honolulu. Extensive sugar cane fields and pineapple plantations came into view and we stopped at the Dole Pavilion to learn about this type of agriculture. Stretching into the distance were rows and rows of immature pineapple plants. The history and development of the industry was described and illustrated on large displays and dioramas. From humble beginnings, the Dole Company built up a substantial business and was a principal source of employment on the island. The sugar cane industry, too, relied on manpower; not only for planting and harvesting, but also for maintaining the many irrigation channels that were evident on the landscape.

We returned to the Polynesian Cultural Center the following day. On the way, we made a side trip to a beauty spot called Waimea Falls Park. Here we could get up close to some of the exotic flowers that bloomed on the island. There were examples of single and double Hibiscus flowers in vibrant hues of gold and magenta. Even more eye-catching was the fantastic shape of the Bird of Paradise flower with its characteristic crown of orange petals on top of the long, graceful stem. Strutting around the grounds were wild guinea fowl that took no notice of the tourist pedestrian traffic.

As we had seen on the previous day, the giant ocean rollers that crashed on the north Oahu coastline tested the skills of serious surfers. Sunset Beach was one of the premier locations and we stopped to watch the diminutive figures with their surfboards skimming across the crest of the breakers. Among the spectators were some enterprising vendors selling fresh, cold coconut milk drinks. Since coconut trees grow in abundance on the island, these individuals collected fallen coconuts and stored them in an ice box attached to an old tricycle. When a customer ordered a drink, they removed the coconut outer husk and top with deft strokes of a small machete and poked a straw into the milk ready for consumption.

The Polynesian Cultural Center gave tourists an insight into the different native ways of life on the hundreds of islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean. Much of the explanation was demonstrated in an event called “The Pageant of the Long Canoes”. Before the pageant took place, visitors could explore the grounds of the complex and enter different ‘villages’ of native huts to view the intricate wood carvings and other artifacts. The pageant consisted of a flotilla of catamaran-type canoes, each carrying a small group of dancers performing the routines of a particular island tribe to the strains of recorded music. Differences in dress were obvious and distinctive. The show continued later in the evening as visitors were invited to an amphitheatre and watched another revue of tribal dancing by candlelight and low wattage floodlight.

As if we hadn’t had enough of native dancing, the next morning we attended the Kodak Hula Show in Waikiki. This was a free event that attracted hundreds of tourists to each show. The colourful spectacle once again showed off the various Polynesian cultural differences. Later we made our way to Pearl Harbor and visited the *USS Arizona* War Memorial. Access to the memorial building and partially sunken remains is strictly controlled by the U.S. Navy that operates a shuttle launch service from a jetty to the memorial. The memorial building is a long, enclosed structure that spans the wreck of the battleship. The story of the “Day of Infamy” is recorded in the building, and openings provide views of the semi-submerged remnants. Before going to one of the main attractions of the Hawaiian holiday – the *luau* – we made a recommended drive to





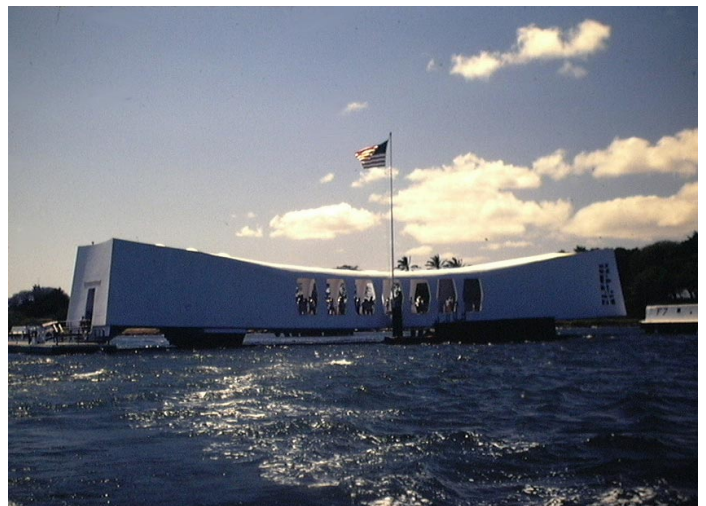
*A Field of Immature Pineapples Growing near the Dole Pavilion, Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Surfers and Giant Breakers at Sunset Beach on the North Coast of Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*"The Pageant of the Long Canoes" at the Polynesian Cultural Center, Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*USS Arizona War Memorial, Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Unearthing the Slowly Cooked Meat at the Luau, Paradise Cove, West Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Monica on Waikiki Beach near The Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, April, 1980.*





*Condominiums Overlooking Kaanapali Beach, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*"Sugar Cane Train" at the Lahaina Terminus, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Typical Business Façades on Front Street, Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*The "Iao Needle", Iao Valley State Park, Kahalui, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Barry at the Haleakala Volcano Crater, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Barry Climbing to the Summit of Puu Ulaula, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



the scenic Pali Lookout. This was a vantage point on state road No. 61 – the Pali Highway – that overlooked a spectacular view of the Koolau Mountain Range and windward coast of Oahu.

The Hawaiian *luau* is an outdoors feast where the meat is slowly cooked (six to seven hours) in a specially prepared in-ground pit oven called an *imu*. Our tour bus took us from the hotel to a resort at Paradise Cove on the west coast of Oahu. More buses arrived and soon a sizeable crowd congregated to watch the unearthing of the cooked meat. Four men used rakes and shovels to scrape away the top layer of soil that covered the *imu*. Beneath this layer was a wet burlap sheet and the *kalua* pig wrapped in banana leaves. Surrounding the meat was another layer of banana leaves lying on large stones that had been heated by burning *koa* wood. Once the embers, stones and leaves were removed, the cooked meat, which was resting on a wire mesh, was placed in a container and taken to the serving buffet area. Following the meal, we were entertained with music, dance and also a palm tree climbing demonstration. Everyone remarked that the *luau* was a unique experience.

Our last day in Honolulu was a leisurely affair and we strolled the entire length of Waikiki Beach, even discovering a ‘genuine’ English pub, the “Rose and Crown”, in nearby King’s Alley – a series of boutiques leading to the International Market Place. It was here that we looked for a souvenir and came across a stall where pieces of coral were for sale. One specimen mounted on a unique tripod stand took our fancy and I negotiated a price with the vendor. It still adorns our sideboard unit as one of our travel mementoes.

**W**e were now basically half way through our Hawaii holiday, and it was time to hop islands from Oahu to Maui. Short-haul flights are regularly scheduled by Aloha Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines, and the journey from Honolulu International Airport to the Kahalui landing strip wasn’t very long. Part of the flight took us over Molokai, another large island in the Hawaiian chain. As soon as we had cleared the Arrivals area we travelled by minibus to a time-shared condominium building at a new development near Kaanapali Beach. We were pleasantly surprised with the beachfront apartment as the unrestricted view from our *lanai* was directly over the beach and ocean.

In the 19th century, the Hawaiian Islands were an important staging point for American whalers, and the town of Lahaina prospered from the coming and going of the whaling fleets. Lahaina was the nearest major community to Kaanapali. One unique access to the town was by way of the restored former Lahaina, Kaanapali & Pacific Railroad – otherwise known as the “Sugar Cane Train”. We took advantage of the steam train service and travelled through the extensive sugar cane fields and over a wooden trestle bridge to the terminus in Lahaina. Much of the 19th century prosperity could still be seen, and imposing buildings such as the Pioneer Hotel, with its solid colonial façade, testified to the seafaring heyday. More indicative of the vagaries of the town’s fortunes was Front Street, where souvenir shops lined the ramshackled road in a somewhat jaded fashion. As a memento of the island with its whaling heritage, I bought a set of cufflinks and tie pin made of whalebone (scrimshaw) detailed with carved seafaring motifs.

Similar to our visit to Oahu, we rented a car to explore the island of Maui. The interior of the West Maui Forest Reserve was accessible by a minor road from Kahalui and terminated at the Iao Valley State Park. From a vantage point, visitors could see a strange rock pinnacle called the “Iao Needle” (2,250 ft. [686 m]).

The semitropical valley was rich in native flowers. The coastal road almost fully circumnavigated West Maui, and the verdant mountains dominated fields of freshly harvested sugar cane. On the north shore giant waves crashed against the many volcanic rocky outcrops and sent up huge fountains of spray.

The Hawaiian Islands chain lies in the so called “Ring of Fire” global area of volcanic activity. The volcanoes of Maui, however, are dormant and the summit of the main cone, known as *Haleakala* (House of the Rising Sun), is accessible by a tortuous mountain road. The ultimate view at the summit of Haleakala is when dawn appears over the crater rim. However, low cloud often accumulates and limits this opportunity. Similarly, fog can settle in the evening, thus making a sunset view impracticable.

Essentially, visiting the summit of Haleakala was an all-day affair given the drive from Kaanapali to the volcano’s base; the twenty-seven mile (43 km) mountain road climb; time for sightseeing, and the return journey. As soon as we reached state road No. 37 – the Haleakala Highway – the scenery became more exotic but, at the junction with the mountain road, the vegetation gave way to a more arid landscape. As with some of the Alpine roads in Europe, any uphill progress was slow especially when negotiating the many hairpin bends. Roughly half way along the road we entered the Haleakala National Park and continued to another series of sharp turns before arriving at the Haleakala Visitors Center, close to the summit of Puu Ulaula (10,023 ft. [3055 m]).

Apart from wisps of clouds settling in the crater and around the neighbouring peaks, the air was crystal clear. Of course, we were affected a little by the altitude and rarified atmosphere, but walked around admiring the crater’s depression – 7 miles (11 km) across, 2 miles (3 km) wide, and nearly 2,600 ft. (800 m) deep – and posed for photographs. I was determined to climb to the very summit of Puu Ulaula and managed it along with some other intrepid souls. Far off on the crest of another peak were the glistening domes of the research observatories at ‘Science City’. With the wonder of this place that’s steeped in Hawaiian folklore and mythology now firmly fixed in our collective memories, we made our descent before the fog and low cloud formed. Part way down, we stopped at the Silversword enclosure. The Silversword is a hardy plant that only grows on the slopes of Haleakala and looks something like a yucca plant.

If we thought the switchback drives up and down Haleakala were hair raising, the following day’s excursion was a tourist driver’s total nightmare. This being the trip along the notorious ‘road to Hana’ (Hana Highway). Everything from Kaanapali was straight forward, but ten miles (16 km) east of Pauwela on state road No. 36 we joined the Hana Highway, and that’s when the fun began. Although noted for its awesome scenery, the condition of the road was more suitable to four wheel drive vehicles than regular cars. The surface along the entire length was pitted with significant potholes and other defects. These, together with numerous sharp and blind turns meant full concentration on driving.

The first stop we made on the Hana Highway was at the Keanae Lookout for a well earned rest. The azure blue ocean and lush, palm covered peninsula was an idyllic snapshot of the Maui coast. Not far away at another rest area was the remarkable Wailua Falls nestled in the Wailua Valley. The water cascaded from a great height and the spray formed a kind of ‘bridal veil’. The Hana Highway continued on its tortuous route until terminating at the community of Hana and state park. In the park were the picturesque Seven Pools, a





*Monica at the Haleakala Volcano Crater, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Barry and Monica at the Haleakala Volcano Crater, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



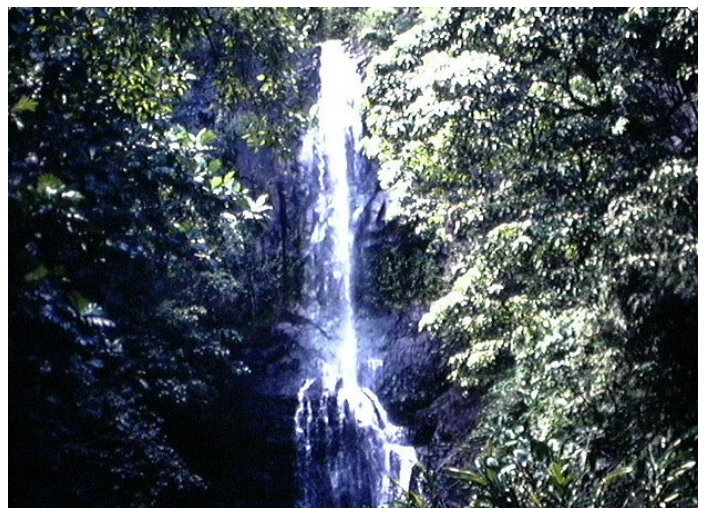
*The Haleakala Volcano Crater late in the Afternoon, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*The Silversword Enclosure on the Slopes of the Haleakala Volcano, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Picturesque Keanae Peninsula on the Road to Hana, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*The Wailua Falls Cascade down in the Wailua Valley, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*





*The “Seven Pools” Cascade at the End of the Road to Hana, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Jacaranda Trees in Full Blossom – a Typical Sight in Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



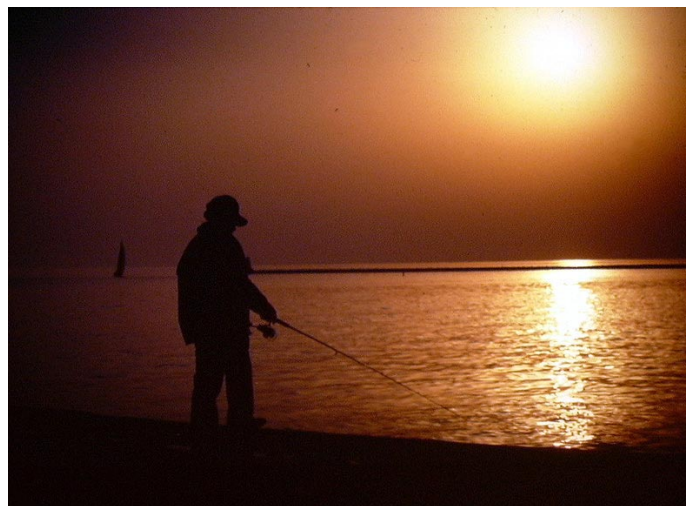
*Exotic Orchids Cultivated in the Kula Botanical Gardens, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Complete Rainbow Forms Over the Pacific Ocean, Kaanapali, Maui, Hawaii, April, 1980.*



*Monica in Lassaline’s Blossoming Apple Orchard, Central Huron, (Goderich Township), May, 1980.*



*Hazy Sunset Created by the Ash Fallout from the Mt. St. Helens Eruption, Goderich, Ont., May, 1980.*



series of natural depressions in the volcanic rock where a stream of water flowed and swirled around before reaching the ocean. This was a favourite watering hole for locals and tourists as they frolicked in the mini waterfalls between the depressions. The return journey was retraced along the Hana Highway, but some of the blossoming African tulip, jacaranda and bougainvillea trees were delightful sights along the way.

Typical of tropical lands, the native flora of Hawaii takes on an exotic character. There are commercial growers that cultivate unusual and much sought after flowers, such as orchids. Two operations we visited were the Kula Botanical Gardens and the Clouds Rest Protea Farm, and we were encouraged to walk around the gardens to admire the many species. The protea is one of the world's most unusual flowers. Although native to South Africa the different varieties grow especially well in the Kula Area of Maui, and are particularly suited to convey feelings of love, sympathy, joy, and best wishes.

The last full day on Maui kept us in Kaanapali to prepare for our flights to Honolulu and Toronto. Staying in the condominium meant self-catering and so we bought staple food items from the local supermarket. Our fellow tourists in the small group did the same thing and, at the end of the week, we all had odds and ends of food that needed either consuming or discarding. A young couple in the group suggested that we should pool all our remnants for the 'last supper'. This turned out to be a great idea and a lively party where we exchanged experiences. Earlier in the day we saw a remarkable sight when "liquid sunshine" fell over the ocean opposite the condo and a complete rainbow appeared in front of us.

## *Back to reality*

After returning to Canada and the realities of a workaday week, I was greeted with the news that Champion was now an official profit sharing company. This meant that end-of-year surplus profits, following tax and corporate deductions, were divided into equal payments and awarded to the employees. Changes at the top that reflected confidence in the company's future prospects included hiring Mr. Steve Symes as the new vice president of finance and administration and Mr. Jim Collins as comptroller. The product, too, had evolved and the newly designed Series II cab was a significant improvement in terms of appearance and efficiency. This change alone meant creating new technical manual artwork wherever the cab was illustrated, and updating information of the revised hydraulic controls and instrumentation.

Don Longwell was the training manager and part of his job was to encourage employees to improve their skills and, by extension, their self-esteem and morale. In May, 1980, he promoted the possibility of creating a debating club based on the principles of "Toastmasters International", a U.S. based public speaking and motivational aptitude society. The ability to speak with authority to an audience was a novel means of casting off shyness, and Toastmasters provided the methods to achieve this level of confidence. Since I didn't have a major hobby, this provided an opportunity to investigate something new and benefit from the anticipated fellowship that such a club could provide. At an information session, several people – both Champion employees and members of the general public – listened to Don explain the Toastmasters' methods and he suggested forming a local chapter. As there was a good response, the "Circle City Toastmasters Club" was formed and an executive elected. I became the club's sergeant-at-arms, with the responsibility of keeping the club in check as defined by "Roberts Rules of Order".

The impact of warm weather brought about an abundance of colour as the boulevard ornamental cherry trees displayed their red and pink blossoms; together with yellow forsythia blooms and the different hues of lilac bushes in neighbourhood yards. In the country, wild hawthorn, apple and pear trees showed off their blossoms and along the hiking trails could be seen flowering violets; trout lilies; bloodroots, and periwinkle. Where apples were cultivated, the orchards were a sea of white. One particular grower, Lassaline's Orchards in the former Goderich Township (now part of Central Huron), was particularly spectacular and we drove there specifically to look at the mass of colour.

The spring sunsets were more colourful than usual. They were caused by the effects of fine ash particles drifting through the air as a result of the May 18th, 1980, volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington, U.S.A. This phenomenon persisted for quite a while until the dust and ash particles finally dispersed.

At the end of the month, Monica's parents arrived for their annual three week visit. We met them at Toronto International Airport and spent a couple of days in the Brantford area before driving to Goderich. Brantford is known as "The Telephone City" as it is closely associated with Alexander Graham Bell, the Scottish-born inventor of the telephone. Bell's boyhood home – known as the Bell Homestead – is a national historic site and open to visitors. Many of Bell's invention memorabilia is on display as well as artifacts from the lifestyle of his time at the house. Close by is St. Paul's, Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks, the first Protestant church in what is now the province of Ontario and built in 1785. The wooden church is significant for the First Nations people of the area, and the tombs of the Mohawk chief Joseph Brant and his son, John, who fought for the English in the War of 1812, are in the graveyard. On our way to Goderich we visited our friends Nick and Liz Avery, who had moved from Clarkson (Mississauga) to Kitchener, for a chat and welcome cup of tea.

The three weeks passed quickly, but we were able to fit in trips to Windsor and the villages of Elmira and West Montrose, Ontario. The purpose of travelling to Windsor was to visit the Hiram Walker distillery in the district of Walkerville. Monica's mother had a close friend, affectionately known as 'Auntie' Kit, back in England. Kit was for many years the personal secretary of the Managing Director for Hiram Walker's operation in the U.K. Although we were unable to tour the complete facility, we came away with a better understanding of Hiram Walker's many products.

Both Elmira and West Montrose are located in parts of the Region of Waterloo that has a large Mennonite population. The so called "Old Order" Mennonite people live an austere lifestyle based on their religious beliefs. Evidence of this austerity can be seen all around: draught animals used instead of farm tractors; uniformity in the mode of dress and personal appearance; absence of power cables to farmsteads, and the use of horsedrawn transportation instead of motor cars and trucks. Elmira is also famous for one of the largest maple syrup festivals in Canada, and hosts the Saturday farmers' market operated primarily by Mennonites. Nearby at West Montrose, the 197 ft. (60 m) covered bridge that spans the Grand River is the last surviving structure of its kind in Ontario. It attracts photographers and artists from near and far.

Two major events took place in Goderich at the end of the month. An air show was organised at Sky Harbour Airport where several vintage aircraft, such as the Vought F-4U Corsair, showed their classic lines





*Monica and her Parents Visit the Bell Homestead, Brantford, Ontario, May, 1980.*



*Walker Historic Museum Containing Memorabilia of Hiram Walker's Distillery, Windsor, Ont., June, 1980.*



*Monica and her Parents Relax by the Lighthouse Overlooking Goderich Harbour, Ontario, June, 1980.*



*Civic Ceremony at the Founder's Day Celebrations, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1980.*



*Barry Wearing the New "Champion Road Hogs" Slowpitch Team T-shirt, Goderich, Ont., July, 1980.*



*The Little Inn Historic Hotel, Main Street, Bayfield, Ontario, July, 1980.*



in flypasts. Expert pilots in their Pitts Specials thrilled the crowd with precise aerobatic manoeuvres, and the small static display attracted many visitors. The town celebrated “Founder’s Day” with a colourful civic ceremony incorporating speeches, band music and much flag waving outside the Huron County Court House. Representatives from Bay City, Michigan, U.S.A., which is the community ‘twinned’ to Goderich, were welcomed and fêted. The essence of the celebration was brought to life in the extensive parade, where antique tractors, cars and other modes of transport, including a horsedrawn pioneer wagon, delighted the onlookers who crowded The Square’s sidewalks.

One notable development at Champion was “Newsbreak”, a prerecorded videotape presentation used as an in-house information medium. The programme was inaugurated at the beginning of July, 1980, after a long experimentation that started in October, 1978. Videotaping technology was quickly advancing and Champion took advantage of it by producing a series of recorded marketing presentations to use as sales promotion tools. Bill Metcalfe organised a complete studio and hired scriptwriter Hugh Oliver, cameraman Doug Bailey and announcer Dennis Brown. The early “Newsbreak” productions, shown on a number of strategically located TV monitors throughout the factory and office, lacked in quality and were criticised by the workers. Improvements were made and, eventually, employees actually looked forward to the sessions.

In the same month there was a Technical Publications Department personnel change. Ever since Bob Scott had left, the department was nominally headed by the chief technical illustrator, John Dicks. Bill Metcalfe decided to bring in a new supervisor, and John Lee, who had previously managed the General Engineering Department, was chosen. John divided his time from his desk at Maitland Road and the activity at Huckins Street, but the arrangement seemed to work.

As the summer of 1980 wore on, the Champion Office slowpitch team struggled through the league’s schedule, often being mercilessly beaten by the more aggressive opposing teams. Now, however, we were rich enough to acquire new T-shirts resplendent with the CHAMPION ROAD HOGS logo that I designed. Not that it improved our performance, but at least we had something of a decent uniform to wear.

Other sporting achievements did come our way. I received a substantial trophy from the Goderich Chess Club as the Level 3 winner. At the end of the curling season, our rink was awarded the 1979-1980 “B” champion’s trophy. We also had been successful in one of the club’s bonspiels and won a prize of two nights accommodation at The Little Inn, Bayfield. This prize was redeemed on our sixth wedding anniversary when we spent a very nice getaway at the historic country inn.

### *Extended summer shutdown*

When the annual three week shutdown was almost upon us at the end of July, we were advised by company CEO, Bruce Sully, that the summer vacation period would be extended by another three weeks due to cash flow difficulties. This was because of a delay in payment for a substantial order of machines sent to the Champion dealer in Uruguay. Until the financial situation was corrected, the company had insufficient funds for its payroll and other expenses. Employees could use previous ‘banked’ vacation days, and other incentives were explored to prevent anyone losing three weeks wages.



Monica and I looked on the extended time off as a bonus and made plans for a trip to Northern Ontario and possibly beyond. Following our experience with the Algoma Central Railway's Agawa Canyon train excursion, we decided to book another similar train trip; this time on the Ontario Northland Railway's "Polar Bear Express" that connected the communities of Cochrane and Moosonee.

The initial route was to the fast, multi-lane Hwy. 400 then, at Barrie, changing to Hwy. 11 through Muskoka 'cottage country' and a stopover at North Bay. There, Hwy. 11 became part of the TCH (Northern Route) and headed north through the rocky Canadian Shield. Many of the communities along the highway became established as gold, silver and other mineral mines opened: chief among them being Cobalt and Kirkland Lake. At Kenogami a large roadside sign indicated the Arctic Watershed, or Continental Divide, where at that point all rivers flowed into the Arctic Ocean. After passing through Matheson, we changed onto Hwy. 101 and headed towards Timmins, one of the most lucrative gold mining towns in Canada.

Not all the ventures remained viable, and there was evidence of several worked out and abandoned gold mines in the area; their buildings and headframes now rusty, dilapidated reminders of a prosperous past. In the community of Schumacher, just outside Timmins, where we stayed for two nights, the Dome Mine was very active and clearly one of the main employers in the area. Timmins, itself, was a typical mining town and the main street boasted many taverns and bars. Nearby in South Porcupine, a mining museum exhibited trains and other equipment used for extracting gold from its ore. We had anticipated visiting the Abitibi Paper Company at Iroquois Falls and touring the mill. Unfortunately, the mill workers were on strike and the facility was closed to visitors. We did find another factory to tour and that was a manufacturer of waferboard used in domestic and industrial building construction. Waste wood chips from other forestry related industries were collected into a mould and fused together with an adhesive under heat and pressure. The end product was then cut into standard size boards. The factory was modern and highly mechanised.

The town of Cochrane is a major junction for road and rail traffic. The Ontario Northland Railway runs north to Moosonee; south to North Bay, and west to Hearst. Hwy. 11 (the TCH Northern Route) also serves the community. It is the southern terminus for the "Polar Bear Express", which is the supply and tourist train linking Cochrane with the First Nations' communities in the James Bay frontier. A large statue of a polar bear stands outside the tourist building as a welcoming symbol.

Experiencing the "Polar Bear Express" also meant staying overnight in the Cree First Nation community of Moosonee, the railway's northern terminus. We made our plans and boarded the train for its 187 mile (301 km) journey through the wild north. The scenery was uninspiring as most of the countryside consisted of endless conifer forest, scrub bush, muskeg and the occasional river. The trees were not tall and majestic, but stunted and that led to monotony. Whistle stops at Fraserdale and Otter Rapids were made to drop off and pick up supplies and passengers. We finally alighted at Moosonee and got our bearings in this Cree settlement on the Moose River. After registering in the Polar Bear Lodge, we made our way to the main tourist and historic attractions on an island at Moose Factory. The only access to the island is by watercraft, and the local Crees have a good business going using outboard motor powered 20 ft. (6 m) aluminium boats to transport tourists, hunters and fishermen. After hailing one of these water taxis, we were taken across the Moose River and docked at the Moose Factory wharf.

'Factory' is a term used to describe trading posts by the big companies such as the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and their agents were known by the common title, 'factor'. HBC founded Moose Factory – the first English settlement in what is now known as the province of Ontario – in 1673. There were several historic buildings to explore; including the HBC staff house and St. Thomas' Anglican Church. The church contained hymn books translated into the Cree language and moosehide altar cloths. One of Ontario's oldest surviving buildings was the blacksmith shop, which was built in 1740 and preserved in the Moose Factory Museum Park, together with a log fort. A traditional Cree First Nation *tipi* was set up to show tourists how the former nomadic aboriginals lived off the land. A native woman demonstrated how bannock, a staple food, was made and the method of cooking over a wood fire located in the middle of the shelter.

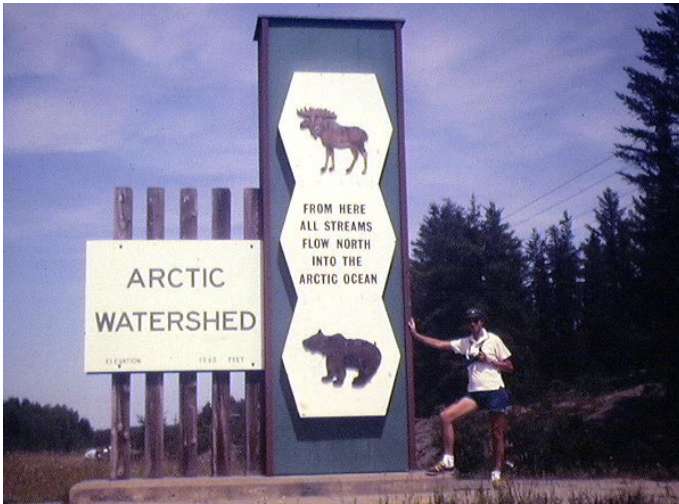
We returned by water taxi to Moosonee and walked around the small community before dinner. The hotel was the only exciting place as, once the train had returned to Cochrane, all the shops and souvenir booths closed and Moosonee became something of a ghost town. We ate in the hotel's dining room and was delighted to try Arctic char, a local fish delicacy, for the first time. The night passed peacefully and, while waiting for the train to arrive, we explored more of the community. Many of the houses were surrounded by mini junkyards and showed an unfortunate level of poverty. Although we didn't see any signs of substance abuse, the liquor store windows were guarded with substantial iron bars to deter break-ins and theft.

The daily "Polar Bear Express" train arrived on time and it was interesting to see the crowd of tourists making its way to the jetty, and a flurry of water taxis churning up the waters of the Moose River. The return trip was equally as boring with the monotonous landscape offering little incentive to look out the window. Arriving in Cochrane, we stayed overnight in preparation for the journey along the TCH Northern Route to Nipigon and Thunder Bay.

The TCH Northern Route passed through communities largely associated with forestry products. Some were given unusual names, for example, Moonbeam. Others had a definite aboriginal identity as in Kapuskasing – locally known as 'Kap' – where newsprint paper was produced and General Motors had its cold weather testing facility. There was also a significant French Canadian presence and, after staying overnight in Hearst, we visited the town's *dépanneur* to buy picnic supplies and were surrounded by French-speaking people. It was still a considerable distance (317 miles [510 km]) to Thunder Bay but we took it steady and passed through Longlac and Geraldton to Nipigon – where the northern and southern routes of the TCH (Hwys. 11 and 17) converge. We stayed two nights in Thunder Bay; the main reason being to visit the replica of Fort William and experience "Voyageur Days"; since our previous visit in 1977 had been curtailed due to flooding of the site.

The day was a complete success, in part because of the good weather, and there were many fascinating things to see in the North West Company post, reconstructed as it would have been in 1816. The Ojibwa First Nation people had a big presence and, dressed in traditional clothes, demonstrated aspects of the aboriginal way of life, as well as describing their interaction with the French Canadian *voyageurs* who traded with them. Costumed guides and artisans brought the museum to life, such as the meeting of the company's business partners and traders in the Great Hall. In the canoe shed, a master shipwright showed the intricacies of birchbark canoe construction. This was one of several crafts on display and others included the black-

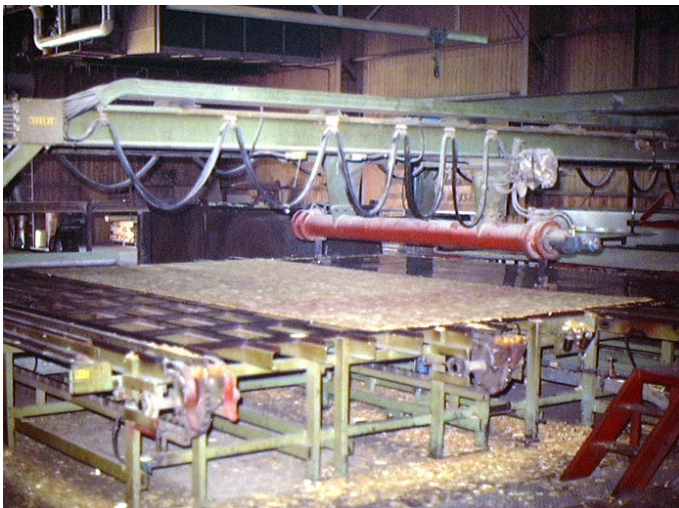




*Barry with the Arctic Watershed Sign, James Bay Frontier Travel Area, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*



*Surface Buildings of a Disused Gold Mine near Timmins, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*



*Interior of a Waferboard Factory near Timmins, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*



*Cree Native Woman Making and Baking Bannock, Moose Factory Island, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*



*Hudson's Bay Company Trading Post (Factory), Moose Factory Island, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*



*Arrival of the Polar Bear Express Train, Moosonee, Northern Ontario, July, 1980.*





*Ojibwa First Nation Woman in Traditional Costume, Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Main Gate. Entrance to the Replica of Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Company Business Partners Meet in the Great Hall, Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Signal Cannon Heralds Arrival of the Voyageurs, Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Inside the Canoe Shed with a New Birchbark Canoe, Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Lengths of Wood Being Sawn in the Sawpit Scaffold, Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario, August, 1980.*



smith, tinsmith, gunsmith, tailor and cooper. We also watched how logs were sawn in a special scaffold, and the ‘squaring off’ of logs using a broadaxe and adze.

Later, two major re-enactments happened. The first was the entry of the *voyageurs* by canoe along the river and through a special lock device into the fort: their arrival heralded with a cannon being fired. Secondly, there was a staged altercation between a disgruntled member of the community and one of the company partners, which resulted in rough justice as meted out on the frontier.

After visiting Thunder Bay, we continued our drive along a stretch of the TCH new to us as far as Kenora, a Northwestern Ontario lumber town on the Lake of the Woods. Along the way and between Dryden and Kenora, the pine forest on both sides of the highway had been ravaged by fire, and the blackened and skeletal remains stood stark against the sky. At Longbow Corners, the TCH divided and we remarked this was the point in 1978 when we drove the Hwy. 71 portion south to Fort Frances on the Rainy River where it flows into Rainy Lake.

The Lake of the Woods is part of an extensive lake district and contains about 14,600 islands. As well as mining and forestry, the area is also noted for its fishing and hunting tourism industry. Some of the islands are used for daily recreation such as picnics, and are connected by regular steamer service from Kenora. One veteran boat, the *MS Argyll II*, also provided dinner cruises, so we booked a passage and enjoyed a leisurely meal that evening.

Our destination the following day was Winnipeg, Manitoba, and, after leaving Kenora, it wasn't far along the TCH before we crossed the provincial boundary and left the rocky Canadian Shield behind. The flat prairie landscape welcomed us to the Manitoba capital, which was to be our furthest point west on this journey.

Touring the Royal Canadian Mint building was one of the highlights in the city. From an overhead glazed gallery, visitors could see the workshops with its large presses that struck quarters (25¢), nickels (5¢) and pennies (1¢) from rolls of stock metal. Guides informed us of the evolution of the Canadian currency and, at the end of the tour there was a gift shop for souvenirs and newly minted coin sets. Outside, the ultramodern building set in extensive, manicured grounds was a remarkable sight. Another photogenic building was the classic Greek architectural style of the Manitoba Legislature with its distinctive dome and gilded statue (the Golden Boy).

The town of Selkirk is located north of Winnipeg and is the site of Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park. In the park is a reconstruction of the HBC fur trading post, including the governor's Big House and a museum containing many artifacts of the mid-1800s. Outside are examples of two modes of transportation specific to the area – the York boat and the Red River cart.

We continued north along a scenic highway towards Lake Winnipeg and stopped in the small community of Pine Falls on the shores of the Winnipeg River, an important source of power for hydroelectricity generation. Since we were unable to tour the Abitibi paper mill in Iroquois Falls, Northern Ontario, it was

gratifying to find another Abitibi mill that was open for public visiting. Our guide was a retired company employee and he gave us a detailed tour through the plant from where the logs arrived; breaking down of the softwood; adding recycled material; then through the pulping process to the final newsprint end product. The characteristic sweet smell of cellulose pervaded the entire area.

Further along the scenic drive there were signs of the huge Manitoba Hydro development. Six dams spanned the Winnipeg River and, not far away at Pinawa, was the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment. Again, we were fortunate and took advantage of a public tour of the facility. This tour was more detailed than our visit to the Bruce Nuclear Power Development, and we even gained access to the reactor hall as well as the laboratories with their robotic manipulators. As public safety was a high priority in the potentially dangerous radioactive environment, every visitor had to wear a special sensor and, at the end of the tour, we were 'decontaminated' by placing our hands in special detection equipment to make sure no radioactive material was present under our fingernails.

We now turned our sights on the return journey, which would be retracing our route along the TCH through Northwestern Ontario. With Kenora, Dryden and Thunder Bay behind us, we continued along the scenic shoreline stretch of Lake Superior past Nipigon and Terrace Bay to Marathon. The highway then made its inland loop to White River and Wawa before once again hugging the lakeshore past Agawa Bay and entering the city of Sault Ste. Marie. To avoid the tedious drive through Sudbury and North Bay, we elected to cross into the U.S.A. and take Interstate highway I-75; then follow Interstate highway I-69 to the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing and home.

## *An active autumn and Christmas at home*

The late summer/early fall weather was ideal for two family reunions. Both Aunt Marjorie from Oregon, U.S.A., and Aunt Marion from London, England, were visiting my cousin, Don Jr. Marion also brought along her adopted son, Nicholas. One particularly warm August evening, the family met and reunited in Stratford, Ontario, for a small picnic in the park before Don, Claire and the aunts went to see a stage performance at the Stratford Festival Theatre. A week later and again on a brilliant day, we visited everyone at Don's house in Milton, Ontario, and, among other activities, celebrated Nicholas's birthday.

An annual early fall attraction in Huron County is the Threshers' Reunion and Steam Show held in the agricultural park of the village of Blyth. This rural event is very popular where hundreds of visitors come to see a variety of exhibits. Chief among these is the display of working steam driven traction engines powering grain threshing combine harvesters using long drivebelts. Apart from the real machines, scale models of the same equipment are on working display. Other exhibits include vintage automobiles; pioneer crafts, including blacksmith demonstrations; a baked goods sale, and lots of live country entertainment. At the end of the session is a parade where all the huffing and puffing steam traction engines are driven along a route past a judges' stand. Prizes are awarded and many bragging rights are sought after by the entrants.

Not long after visiting the Blyth Steam Show, we went on a trip to Niagara Falls specifically to visit Bright's Winery. Public tours of the popular wine company were available and this was the first time we had





*Barry Aboard the MS Argyll II. Dinner Cruise on the Lake of the Woods, Kenora, Ontario, August, 1980.*



*Interior of the Royal Canadian Mint Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, August, 1980.*



*Formal Room of the HBC Governor's Big House, Lower Fort Garry, Selkirk, Manitoba, August, 1980.*



*Red River Cart and the HBC Governor's Big House, Lower Fort Garry, Selkirk, Manitoba, August, 1980.*

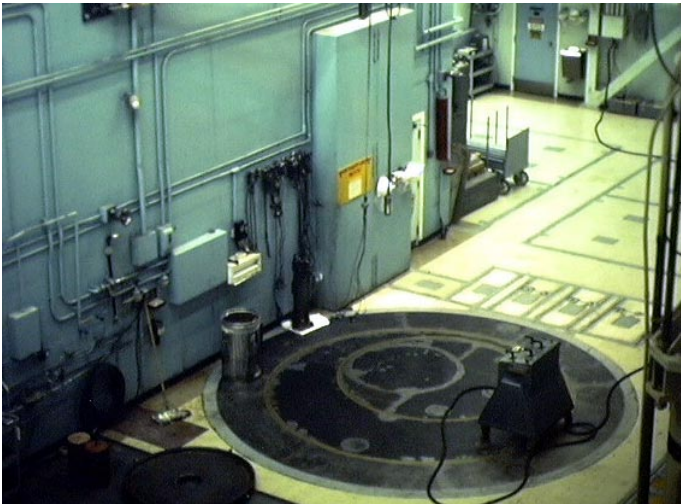


*Exterior of the Abitibi Paper Mill, Pine Falls, Manitoba, August, 1980.*



*Interior of the Abitibi Paper Mill, Pine Falls, Manitoba, August, 1980.*





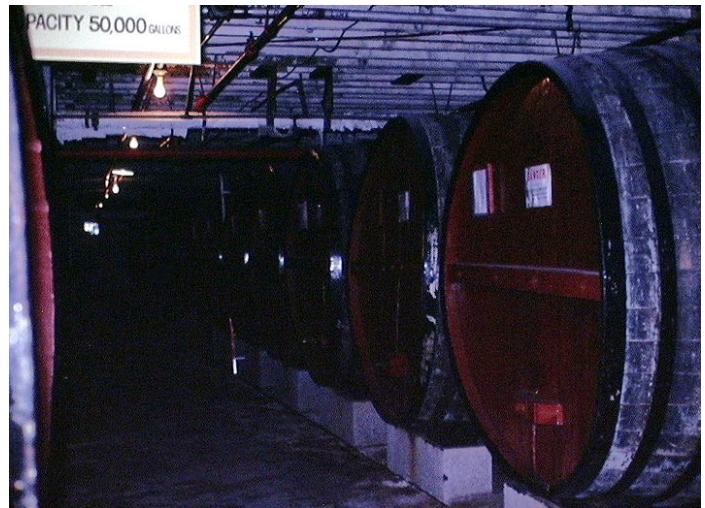
*Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment Reactor Hall, Pinawa, Manitoba, August, 1980.*



*Monica Being Decontaminated at Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment, Pinawa, MB, August, 1980.*



*Selection of Traction Engines at the Steam Fair, Blyth, Ontario, September, 1980.*



*Interior of the Wine Cellar at Bright's Winery, Niagara Falls, Ontario, September, 1980.*



*Working Party at the Annual Trail Clearing Exercise, Hoffmeyer Property, Ontario, October, 1980.*



*Barry and Monica Celebrate Christmas at Home, Goderich, Ontario, December, 1980.*



been to a large commercial operation in the Niagara region. Among the many interesting items was the wine aging process in huge wooden storage barrels in the winery cellar. In later years when we visited other, much smaller wineries, such as Inniskillin, Château des Charmes (when they were just starting up), etc., we appreciated the subtle differences of the so-called 'boutique' winery products to those of the giant corporations; Bright's being among them.

After the resumption of normal production at Champion following the Labour Day holiday weekend, I settled down into the daily routine keeping the technical manuals up to date with changes to the product. A new face appeared in the senior management ranks when Tom Powell was hired as chief engineer following the resignation of his predecessor, Denver Dickie, who went into the turf (sod) machine business.

Fall activities meant hiking outings and preparing again for the annual trail clearing exercise in and around the McHolm's and Hoffmeyer's properties. With pruning shears and bucksaws we tackled the overgrowth that had accumulated during the summer so that cross-country skiers would have an obstruction-free path to follow through from the Naftel's Creek Conservation Area to Porter's Hill. One particular nice October hike was in Pinery Provincial Park near Grand Bend where the oak and pine bushland was a delight to wander through. Flowering witch hazel was also an unusual sight there.

For a couple of years we had been invited to attend the social event of the year, known as the Rotary Ball. Almost a 'black tie' event where guests dressed in their finest evening wear, the dinner and dance was attended by the who's who of Goderich society and took place in the Saltford Valley Hall. The meal was supplied by outside caterers, for example, "The Friar's Cellar" from London, and music was provided by a live band. This year, Monica was lucky to receive one of the table centre floral arrangements as a prize.

My membership with the U.K. based Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC) was still valid, but the distance barrier meant that belonging to the organisation was somewhat becoming redundant. In North America, there was a similar group of professionals known as the Society for Technical Communication (STC). The nearest chapter was in Kitchener/Waterloo, but I considered it worthwhile joining the society – since Champion paid the annual membership dues – and applied, whereupon I was accepted and started to attend some of the events organised by the Kitchener/Waterloo chapter.

1980 was now drawing to a close and we decided this year to spend the Christmas holiday at home. To make it a truly festive occasion, we bought an artificial Christmas tree from the Canadian Tire store and, one evening I set about to assemble the various parts. We were very pleased with it and added various ornaments, many of which we still have.

It was a real 'white' Christmas with significant snowfall accumulation, so a good part of the time off work was spent cross-country skiing. Together with our friends Norris and Shirley McEwen we explored some new trails at Wildwood Park near Bayfield, and went further afield to Grand Bend's Pinery Provincial Park where skiers could stop and rest in wooden shelters strategically located along the extensive groomed trail. A mug of hot chocolate or tomato soup went down well on the crisp days and we all enjoyed this wonderful recreation.

## *1981 starts slowly then it's 'out west' again*

The 1980-1981 winter snowfall almost matched that of three years previous, and we were blessed with ideal cross-country skiing conditions, which meant further outings to Naftel's Creek Conservation Area and Grand Bend's Pinery Provincial Park. Together with the chess club, Toastmasters club and curling, this activity helped while away the first quarter of the year.

At work the recession was still in evidence, and in April there were changes to the upper management structure. Company CEO, Bruce Sully, needed to rationalise some of the firm's organisation so he appointed Mr. George Grodecki as a new group president. Jack Freeman, the group vice president for finance, was promoted to president of the Rosny Corporation that controlled the Champion Group of Companies. These appointments had the desired effect on restructuring Champion and its subsidiaries and there were some departures as inefficiencies were weeded out. Fortunately, the Marketing Division wasn't affected too much and it was business as usual in the Technical Publications Department.

Freezing conditions were still apparent in March and the harbour was icebound. However, a month later it was a different story as warmer weather allowed the shipping season to start: even to the extent that a saltwater boat from Greece visited to take on a load of grain. Sky Harbour airport, too, was becoming more active and different visitors, including a large de Havilland Buffalo cargo plane, dropped in to refuel.

With the onset of the spring we contemplated an early vacation and set our sights once again on the Canadian West Coast; this time including a visit to Vancouver Island. After making the flight arrangements, it was decided that land transportation for both Vancouver Island and the mainland should be a 'split' car rental. This provided a discount deal with the same car rental company out of two separate locations. On April 29th, 1981, we left Toronto International Airport and headed to Vancouver, BC, then waited a short while until the flight continued to its destination at Victoria, the provincial capital of British Columbia, on Vancouver Island. There a local bus took us to our hotel in downtown Victoria where, under sunny skies, we explored this historic city.

Apart from the principal sites on the waterfront, such as the Empress Hotel, the city was endowed with many heritage buildings. The solid Victorian commercial façades lining Wharf Street were no exception and appeared majestic lit up by the late afternoon sun. Some of the older structures had even been repurposed – as seen in Nootka Court, a downtown shopping mall. The two main jewels in the crown were the Empress Hotel, built in the standard Canadian Pacific Railway château style, and the multi-domed BC Provincial Parliament Buildings. The Empress Hotel was admired for its massive bulk and characterised by the many dormer windows and jagged, steep pitched green patina roofline. We were fortunate, given the time of day, to gain access to the interior of the BC Legislature. Inside the building, the rich trappings of the discussion chamber and the intricate painted fresco beneath the main dome were awe inspiring. As the evening progressed and the city lights came on, we continued our perambulation along the waterfront and came across Centennial Square. The large, open area with its fountain commemorated the centennial of Victoria in 1962, but was also now a haven for homeless people. Nearby, however, were boutiques and restaurants and we had a very enjoyable dinner of fish and chips, a touch of the local penchant for a bit of old England.



The next day was another one exploring the city on foot. Down at the harbour, an old fashioned steam luxury liner, the *SS Princess Marguerite*, was making ready to set sail on her scheduled short voyage to Port Angeles, Washington, U.S.A. Watching the columns of smoke emitting from the funnels and admiring her classic lines, it was as if the scene was a throwback to the time when cruising was defined by class segregation, *haute cuisine*, fine clothes and relaxed surroundings. Near the BC Provincial Parliament Buildings was Thunderbird Park, a large open area that contained a forest of totem poles and other carved relics indicative of the various West Coast aboriginal tribes such as the Haida, Tsimshian and Nootka. A short walk from Thunderbird Park was another, more extensive public recreational area, Beacon Hill Park, with its many herbaceous borders and amazing view of the Juan de Fuca Strait.

No visit to Victoria should exclude ‘taking tea’ at the Empress Hotel. Every afternoon there is a ritual of high tea served in the hotel’s original lobby. We arrived in good time to ensure a place at this popular event and were shown to our table that was properly set for the occasion. High tea consisted of thin sandwiches, cakes and scones that accompanied the tea, itself. A very nice experience.

To round off the day, we visited the Royal British Columbia Museum which housed a multitude of artifacts depicting the lifestyles of the West Coast First Nations people, as well as examples of indigenous flora and fauna in a series of lifelike dioramas. After browsing around the museum, we headed for Chinatown, an ethnic district within the unmistakable signs of British colonialism, once dominated by the presence of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

The following day was earmarked for visiting one of Vancouver Island’s notable highlights – Butchart Gardens. This was a worked out limestone quarry until it was transformed by the Butchart family into a year-round horticultural tourist attraction. The gardens are divided into specific sections and, depending on the time of year, certain flowers bloom at their peak – for example, the English rose garden is at its best in summer. We noted there was also an abundance of statuary, including a bronze wild boar where visitors, who rubbed its snout for good luck, had created a polished effect. Typical rainy Vancouver Island weather meant borrowing umbrellas (transparent) at the ticket office, and the first part of the visit was rather damp. However, the riot of colour in the Sunken Garden rockery section compensated for the grey sky. Rhododendrons of various colours were prolific and we admired the water jet ballet of the Ross Fountain. Later, the clouds parted and we were bathed in full sunshine that really uplifted both the Italian and Japanese gardens that were interspersed with themed structures built in traditional styles, sculptures and miniature trees.

We returned to Victoria and again marvelled at the city skyline at night when the outlines of principal buildings are illuminated by strings of lightbulbs and the Empress Hotel’s prominent façade is floodlit. The next few days meant travelling in the rental car and, regardless of the weather conditions, we made the most of our time on the island.

Initially, our explorations took us along the southwestern shoreline; leaving the city through the district of Esquimalt which has been a naval base since the middle of the nineteenth century. The scenic coast road took us to historic Sooke, a small community deeply entrenched in the forestry industry. “Moss Cottage”, with its steeply pitched roof and cedar shakes, was typical of the vernacular West Coast architecture there.

We started our island tour from Mile 0 of the TCH (Hwy. 1) in downtown Victoria and headed north along the highly scenic Malahat Drive towards Nanaimo. At a lookout graced with an aboriginal totem pole, visitors could see the Gulf Islands in the Strait of Georgia that faded away into the distant mist, and the faint outline of the Coast Mountains on the mainland. The city of Nanaimo was built on coal. Similar to Victoria, there was a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) presence. The HBC had a vested interest in the coal industry as well as its traditional role in the fur trade. Protection for its mining workers was provided by a wooden blockhouse – now a museum. Today, Nanaimo is a well-heeled retirement community.

It was our intention to drive the entire distance of Hwy. 19 from Nanaimo to Port Hardy on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. However, the rainy and foggy weather – so typical of the area – prevented us from enjoying the scenery and we devised an alternative plan. After travelling north, we reached a convenient turnaround point at Comox; then retraced our route as far as Qualicum Beach. After taking a connecting road to Hwy. 4, we continued west towards Port Alberni and, further on, the Pacific Ocean coast.

This particular route was a major compensation for not fulfilling the drive to Port Hardy. Ten miles (16 km) east of Port Alberni is MacMillan Provincial Park. Hundreds of giant Douglas fir trees – many over 600 years old and reaching up to 200 ft. (61 m) high – are one of the awe-inspiring features in the park. We resolved to stop for a longer visit on the return journey, but in the meantime continued through Port Alberni with its dominating MacMillan Bloedel pulp and paper mill (the first in British Columbia) to Long Beach on the oceanfront.

Long Beach is one of three distinct parts of the Pacific Rim National Park. It consists of 7.5 miles (12 km) of hard sand littered with logs that have escaped from booms heading towards coastal sawmills. The logs are piled high on top of each other at the high-water mark and provide a remarkable sight. The park's backdrop is one of an extensive rain forest, and the shoreline is punctuated with craggy headlands where, despite the inhospitable environment, plants bloom in the rocky terrain. We explored some of the trails in the rain forest, taking care not to step on banana slugs (so called because of their shape, size and colour) that abounded on the damp forest floor. The overhead evergreen canopy was very dense and allowed only a small amount of daylight to filter through; so it was akin to hiking in a twilight.

Not far from Long Beach is the maritime community of Uclulet where we stayed overnight. The marina was busy with recreational craft and it also had a floatplane docking facility. A significant tourist attraction, however, was a floating restaurant – the decommissioned motor yacht, *MV Canadian Princess*. We elected to have our evening meal on board and celebrate as a kind of *finale* of the journey 'out west'.

The return trip meant retracing the route along Hwys. 4 and 19 to Nanaimo; then the TCH to Victoria. Heading east provided us with scenic views of snowcapped mountains near Port Alberni. Entering MacMillan Provincial Park, we stopped in "Cathedral Grove", an area of some of the spectacular giant Douglas fir trees. We then continued to Victoria for a last stopover before moving on to the mainland by way of BC Ferries, the company that operates several large ferryboats on a regular schedule. The voyage through the Gulf Islands was smooth and we passed a sister ship, the *MV Queen of Saanich*, on the way. After arriving at the mainland, we tied up and then took the bus to our downtown Vancouver hotel.





*Historic Commercial Buildings Lining Wharf Street, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, April, 1981.*



*The Empress Hotel, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, April, 1981.*



*The BC Provincial Parliament Buildings, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, April, 1981.*



*SS Princess Marguerite Prepares to Leave Port, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, April, 1981.*



*Barry 'Taking Tea' in the Empress Hotel Lobby, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, April, 1981.*



*Sunken Garden Rockery, Butchart Gardens near Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*





*The BC Provincial Parliament Buildings at Night, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*



*Historic 'Moss Cottage', a Typical Wood Framed House, Sooke, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*



*The Hudson's Bay Company Wooden Blockhouse Site at Fort Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*



*Log Pile on Long Beach, Pacific Rim National Park, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*



*Mile 0 Marker of the Trans Canada Highway in BC, Victoria, Vancouver Island, BC, May, 1981.*



*Crossing the Strait of Georgia with the Gulf Islands and the MV Queen of Saanich Ferry, BC, May, 1981.*



Although we had seen the highlights of Vancouver during our one day visit in 1974, we now had the time and opportunity to explore the city more thoroughly. Our hotel was at a convenient central location and allowed us to walk to various sightseeing venues, including the extensive Stanley Park. The weather had improved and sunshine lit up the historic buildings of “Gastown”, where we were intrigued with the workings of the steam clock, a prime tourist attraction. The district’s name, “Gastown”, is derived from the nickname of John “Gassy Jack” Deighton, a fast-talking con man who beguiled people to finance and build his saloon. We also took a stroll through Vancouver’s Chinatown – the second largest in North America following San Francisco – which had all the trappings of Oriental culture similar to Victoria’s or Toronto’s equivalent ethnic district.

The ‘split’ car rental arrangement also meant that we had independent transportation without having to rely on public transit. Driving across the Lions Gate Bridge (over Burrard Inlet) took us to the suburb of West Vancouver. Not far from the TCH intersection is Capilano Canyon Park and the famous Capilano Suspension Bridge. This footbridge was built in 1899 and is 230 ft. (70 m) above the Capilano River. We noticed how apprehensive first time visitors were when stepping onto the swinging structure. Some even turned back, not being able to overcome their fear of the oscillation and height and, indeed, it was intimidating. Others showed off their bravado by running across. Still it was an interesting experience.

Later in the day, we went to another attraction, this time in North Vancouver, and took a ride on the “Superskyride” aerial tram (cable car or gondola) to ascend Grouse Mountain where, even in May, there was considerable snow accumulation at the top. We dined in the restaurant at the summit and admired the magnificent views of Greater Vancouver where, as darkness fell, the twinkling lights of the city made it look like a fairyland.

To take advantage of the rental car, the next four days were spent touring around the BC interior and part of the state of Washington in the U.S.A. The Okanagan Valley was an area of British Columbia unknown to us so we made plans to follow the TCH and travel along the scenic Fraser Canyon to Kamloops then enter the Okanagan Valley from the north. Along the way, several communities such as Armstrong and Vernon had a classic “Wild West” character, with boomtown frontages and wide, empty streets. The scenery became more interesting as we progressed through the Coldstream Valley to Okanagan Lake, and soon we were surrounded by apple orchards in full blossom. Driving further south along Hwy. 97, we passed through the main agricultural and viticultural centre of Kelowna; then to Penticton where vineyards were seen in profusion on the slopes of the valley. Finally we arrived at Osoyoos, a community set in semi-desert and with a singular Mexican-Spanish influence in its local architecture. The hot and dry micro-climate at the southernmost end of the Okanagan Valley helps to produce some of the earliest fruits and vegetables in Canada, and cacti thrive in the arid conditions.

An interesting side trip was venturing into the state of Washington and visiting the Grand Coulee Dam. The dam was a well known ‘make work’ project initiated in the Great Depression of the 1930s in the U.S.A. It stemmed the flow of the Columbia River and created Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake, a man-made reservoir used for irrigation and recreation. The 550 ft. (168 m) high dam also deals with flood control, river regulation and electrical power generation.

Returning to Canada, we made our way through a very scenic part of the BC interior with its lofty, snowcapped Cascade Mountains. After fifteen days in British Columbia we left Vancouver and flew back to Toronto. The following week was to have some interesting developments at work.

## *Promotion at work*

Over the years, my workload steadily increased as new product changes and additional publications needed to be processed through the system. Some of the issues were addressed with overtime, but deadlines were becoming more urgent and my personal resources were being stretched. I had discussed the possibility of hiring an assistant technical writer with the department's supervisor, John Lee. Despite the hiring restraints at the time, a request was forwarded to the Personnel Department and John interviewed likely candidates. My intentions went further. If another writer was hired, I should be considered for promotion to a 'senior' status. Given that such a position had to be created, this involved a lot of work for both the company and the union. Of course, the union was eager to cooperate as adding another 'brother' was in its interest, but management had to be totally convinced

After all the postings and other collective agreement wrinkles were ironed out, the day came (May 18th, 1981) when the new hire and my promotion to senior technical writer were announced. John introduced Gregory (Greg) Pillon to the team and we allocated him with a workstation and I took him on a familiarisation tour. Although Greg wasn't knowledgeable about earthmoving machinery, his father, Ray Pillon, was the vice president of marketing for Timberland Equipment – a heavy equipment manufacturer – and Greg had some previous mechanical 'hands-on' experience. Greg was a young twenty-something, married to Celia and had a small son. He was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario, and attended a university in Michigan where he obtained a B.A. degree. He was very self-confident and took the initiative whenever it was needed. For myself, I was now in a kind of lead-hand situation and my salary increased to \$434.58 a week.

After becoming a member of STC, I learned that the society organised an annual conference. This year, the 28th International Technical Communication Conference (ITCC) was being held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and earlier I had obtained permission to go to the event. I flew commercial from London, Ontario, via Buffalo to Pittsburgh; then found my way downtown to the William Penn Hotel, which was also the venue for the ITCC. The weather was sunny and so I strolled around the immediate downtown blocks just to get a flavour of the city. Battered old streetcars rumbled along, but there were also modern, shining glass and steel skyscrapers in well manicured urban parks.

The ITCC opened with a keynote welcoming address to the estimated 1200 conferees; then we dispersed to one of four 'stem' introductory courses – in my case, the Writing and Editing stem. There were many sessions dealing with the emergent technologies of the day. Word processing in the role of computer-assisted technical writing; formatting and text-editing directly on CRT screens, and interfacing with phototypesetting machines and high-speed printers promised an exciting future.

As well as the ITCC's academic component, there were opportunities for conferees and their guests to attend sightseeing trips organised by local tourism agencies. I went on one specifically to tour the luxury





*Statue of John “Gassy Jack” Deighton and Restored Buildings in “Gastown”, Vancouver, BC, May, 1981.*



*Typical Buildings in the Ethnic Chinatown District of Vancouver, BC, May, 1981.*



*People Walk Across the Capilano Suspension Bridge, West Vancouver, BC, May, 1981.*



*The Grouse Mountain “Superskyride” Aerial Tram, North Vancouver, BC, May, 1981.*



*Vineyards on the Hillsides near Penticton in the Lower Okanagan Valley, BC, May, 1981.*



*Grand Coulee Dam, 1930s Depression Work Project, Washington, U.S.A., May, 1981.*





*Exterior of "Fallingwater" Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Bull Run, Pennsylvania, May, 1981.*



*Ohio River and the Downtown Skyline of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May, 1981.*



*Three McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantoms as Seen from Fanshawe Park, London, Ontario, June, 1981.*



*View of Canada's Wonderland from the Top of the Mountain, Vaughan, Toronto, Ontario, June, 1981.*



*Don Jr. and Barry Get Ready for the Start of the 10 km Classic Race, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1981.*



*Demonstration of Dutch Klompen Dancers, Windmill Island, Holland, Michigan, August, 1981.*



private house, “Fallingwater”, designed by the renowned American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The trip was basically a full day away from the conference as the house is nestled deep in a secluded part of Pennsylvania. “Fallingwater” belonged to the wealthy Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh. From the parking lot, the visiting party walked along a path surrounded by forest; then the woods parted and the house appeared as if by magic – not in its entirety but sufficient enough to lure you onwards. A long, self-supporting archway dripping with purple wisteria over a broken flagstone terrace led to an entrance. Once inside the house, signs of Wright’s work were everywhere – from the horizontal elements of the fieldstone fireplace to the wooden furniture, window frames and ornaments. However, the full impact of the house wasn’t apparent until you moved outside to strategic observation points around the estate. Here, you understood the mastery of Wright’s linear projections as they cantilevered away from the native rock and over the cascading river that gave the house its name.

Another social event was awaiting us back in Pittsburgh. Each conference has its ‘hometown’ evening welcome party to offset the rigours of the information sessions during the day. Usually there’s a theme attached to the party, or some other identification associated with the host city. In this case, the Pittsburgh STC chapter arranged for an evening dinner cruise that plied the two rivers – the Ohio and Monongehela – that converged there. As dusk settled, the city skyscrapers became lit up by the setting sun.

The return journey on Saturday, May 23rd, 1981, from Pittsburgh became an adventure in its own right. Some of the other conferees – including Roberta Wilensky from the U.S. Federal Reserve in Minneapolis, who corresponded with me for a while – were at the airport and, after saying goodbye, my scheduled flight from Pittsburgh to Buffalo was straight forward. However, when I arrived at the transfer flight counter I was informed that the Buffalo to London, Ontario, flight assigned to me was a weekday flight only. In effect I was stranded at Buffalo Airport. The only thing I could think of was to hire a car on a one-way rental. It was getting late and the car rental desks were closing for the day. Only the Hertz Rent-a-Car kiosk was open and I explained my dilemma to the clerk. Although the one-way rental was feasible, the problem was I could only rent a car with Ontario licence plates. As it turned out, there was only one car licenced in Ontario on the Hertz lot so it was ‘Hobson’s choice’. I was at least mobile and so continued my journey home on the road. The next challenge was to drop off the rental car at the nearest Hertz Rent-a-Car depot, which was in Stratford, a one hour drive from Goderich. Monica followed me in our own car then, after relinquishing the rented vehicle, we returned home. Naturally I wasn’t too happy with the travel agent, but at least my extraordinary expenses were approved by Champion’s management.

## *A hot summer*

As the days grew longer and summer arrived, so did a season of hot weather. At both ends of the month of June, we enjoyed two different types of outdoor activities. First, the London Air Show attracted huge crowds on a weekend with clear skies and very warm temperatures. While we were driving slowly in the lineup to the parking lot entrance, I noticed that the coolant temperature gauge was registering an abnormally high reading. This did not recede, indicating to me that a sensor was faulty and not signalling the electric fan to activate. The situation didn’t look good and so I pulled off to the side of the road and allowed the engine to cool down. Not wanting to miss the action, we decided to find a vantage

point away from the airport and be entertained on a limited basis. We found a likely spot in Fanshawe Park and watched the flypasts of several jet fighters, including a trio of McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantoms and a formation of four McDonnell F-101 Voodoos. The precision aerobatic show was performed by the U.S. Navy “Blue Angels” in their distinctive blue liveried Douglas A-4 Skyhawks. In due course, the faulty temperature sensor was replaced.

The second out-of-town event of the month was a visit to the newly opened theme park called Canada’s Wonderland. The Disneyland-type attraction, located in the northwest Toronto suburb of Vaughan, was chosen because I had been given Monday, June 29th, off in lieu of Wednesday, July 1st (Canada Day public holiday) and we thought the park wouldn’t be busy. Unfortunately, thousands of other visitors thought the same and, on a blistering hot day, we battled the crowds to experience a few of the rides and other features, such as the mock pirate fight – a slapstick routine with colourful clowns as the actors – and cablecar access to the top of the park’s signature ‘mountain’.

The onset of summer also heralded the chess club playoffs for the various level championships and also for the grand master. Despite the high calibre skills of the top players, nobody could dethrone Charlie MacDonald, who reigned supreme. I took the most improved player award for 1980-1981, so didn’t leave empty-handed.

For the next two months, the weather remained hot. Irrespective of the elevated temperatures, a significant number of recreational runners came out to compete for the 10 km Classic Run around the streets of Goderich. I had mentioned this to my cousin, Don Jr., a keen running athlete, and we decided to make a friendly competitive wager. He and Claire came to town and we prepared ourselves at the start in front of the town hall on West Street. From the beginning it was clear that Don’s many years of running experience had kept him in good shape and was way ahead of me in terms of distance. Although I had trained a little in the evenings leading up to the race, the 10 kilometres seemed interminable, but I finished the race nonstop (there were water refreshments handed out by volunteers along the route) and that was good enough for me as a beginner.

As the August Civic Holiday long weekend isn’t celebrated in the U.S.A., we decided to spend the three days away on a brief circular tour of parts of Michigan. The western destination was the city of Holland in an area settled by Dutch pioneers on the shores of Lake Michigan. The journey from the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing took us through Flint and Lansing to Grand Rapids then to Holland. Tourist attractions revolved around the Dutch culture, and we were entertained by demonstrations of ‘klompen’ dancing as well as visiting the rebuilt windmill (the last one to leave Holland) on Windmill Island. After leaving Holland and staying overnight in Kalamazoo, we drove to Battle Creek where the Kellogg’s cereal factory is a major employer. There were tours of the corn flakes plant and we saw how the cereal was processed from the raw ingredients to the finished product. In the highly automated factory, we were surprised to see that the vitamin and mineral nutritional additives were, in actual fact, sprayed on the processed corn flakes as a liquid mist. The cereal was then conveyed to the packaging section where some of the handling jobs done by human operators appeared to be fairly lowly. We returned home by way of Detroit and the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing.



As the year progressed, some redundancies took place at Champion. George Grodecki eliminated certain jobs including the Technical Publications Department spare parts compiler. However, through seniority, Ray Frydrych was able to displace Tom Harris as junior printer in the print room.

### *A unique experience and ambition fulfilled*

Ever since my father took me to the Farnborough air shows, I have retained a keen interest in aircraft. As a boy I would read popular aeronautical magazines and admire cutaway technical illustrations of aircraft often found in comics. Advances in aero technology was such that supersonic commercial flights were now everyday events. The Anglo-French Concorde project had succeeded and completely overshadowed similar efforts made by the Americans and Russians. Now, several transcontinental routes had been established and Concorde became a byword for the ultimate in flying travel.

It occurred to me that I would like to fly supersonic and decided to save up for a flight on Concorde. The CAN\$1,200 one-way ticket was going to be incorporated into a visit to England, and the return passage would be a regular trans-Atlantic flight. I was eligible for two weeks vacation and so booked them for the end of September and made the flight arrangements with the travel agent.

Monica travelled to England six days ahead of me on a regular scheduled flight from Toronto and she spent that time with her parents in Coventry. On the day of my departure, a chartered minibus took me from Goderich to Toronto International Airport where I cleared U.S. Customs for a short-haul flight to New York's La Guardia Municipal Airport. The next step of the journey was to take a taxi from La Guardia to John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport. I then found the British Airways Concorde check-in desk and cleared security to enter the Concorde hospitality lounge. If you are a passenger on Concorde you should expect topnotch service, and waiting for your flight in the hospitality lounge was no exception. The lounge was furnished with comfortable leather armchairs, and complimentary alcoholic beverages and snacks were available. For business travellers, there were also full office facilities (phone, fax and secretarial help – this was, of course, in the days before the Internet, mobile phones, etc.).

There were two scheduled Concorde flights each day between New York JFK and London Heathrow airports. Initially, I had been booked on the first flight out of JFK. However, due to a seat allocation error, I was 'bumped' to the second flight. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise since I was anxious to photographically record the flight. Out of the lounge windows, I could see the plane being towed into position in readiness for passenger boarding. Since I wasn't on this flight, it seemed a good opportunity to photograph the aircraft at close quarters. I persuaded a security guard to allow me close access and took some shots as the Concorde moved slowly under its own power along the taxiway. Unfortunately, the main runway was out of sight so I was unable to record the aircraft's take off. I then returned to the hospitality lounge and indulged in some additional drinks and snacks.

When the time arrived to board the second flight, I was very relaxed and a shade tipsy. It turned out that not all the seats were filled (there are no more than 100) and I was able to secure a forward bulkhead position near the cockpit. The time came for take off and, after the usual preamble and safety instructions, I

prepared myself for the four powerful Olympus engines to catapult the Concorde into the sky. With a mighty surge of acceleration it didn't take long before we were airborne and gaining height. According to the official statistics, we would cruise at a speed of up to 1,460 mph (2349 km/h) – 2.2 times the speed of sound – for a theoretical flight time of 2 hr 54 min and 30 sec.

To fly supersonically, Concorde has to reach a cruising altitude of around 49,000 ft. (14 935 m). This is far above what regular jet airliners maintain, and one of the peculiarities of this elevation is the very dark blue sky seen through Concorde's small windows. We were advised by the captain that we had reached the zenith of our ascent and were levelling out in readiness for supersonic speed. I was certainly not prepared for the experience. Amazingly, accelerating to supersonic speed was identical to the reaction when initially taking off from the ground, but this time in midair. Apart from the apparent G-force, the digital readout on the aircraft's Machmeter, which was close to my seat, showed the status of the Concorde's speed relative to the speed of sound (approx. 760 mph [1223 km/h] or Mach 1). Slowly the 'M' figure increased until it reached M2.00, indicating we were travelling at twice the speed of sound (Mach 2).

There was a slight noticeable increase in engine noise and general vibration, otherwise there was no other appreciable difference in the general feeling of being in flight. Our meal – together with complimentary champagne and cognac – was served by the steward and stewardesses. Now, by this time I was getting light-headed and, as the flight attendants didn't have a full payload of passengers to look after, I spent some time chatting with them. I did have an ulterior motive, however, and that was to get permission to visit the cockpit. I explained that I had a work connection with the Concorde (Rolls-Royce turbine engines) and this must have interested the captain as I found myself up front and talking with the crew of three. They showed me the controls in the rather cramped area, but I couldn't take any photos. Still, in the days before 9/11 and heightened security, this was a bonus to the trip.

We had shaved a little under five hours off the regular flight time and landed at London's Heathrow Airport in the evening. Before disembarking, each passenger was presented with an official certificate, signed by the captain and crew members, verifying that we had flown supersonically. Other souvenirs were handed out, including two packs of playing cards emblazoned with the Concorde symbol. It had been arranged for my father to meet me at the Arrivals concourse, but he didn't know about me having to change flights and so had to hang around for the second Concorde to arrive. When I eventually cleared H.M. Customs and Immigration, I was still euphoric about the flight as well as more than a little 'under the influence' due to the generous libation of in-flight liquor. Still, Dad took it in with good humour and soon we arrived at my parents' house in Hatfield.

**M**onica had been staying not only with her parents in Coventry, but also with her cousin, Trecia, in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, and rejoined me for the duration of the Hatfield visit. For the next eight days we pattered around the Hertfordshire countryside, including a visit to the Elizabethan Hatfield House, and also made a trip into London to reunite with Michael and Philip. Following the train ride from Hatfield to Kings Cross, Monica and I made our way through the Pentonville back roads to Chapel Market and eventually met our friends at the "Camden Head" pub just off the colourful flea market alleyway of Camden Passage.





*Concorde Being Towed into Position for Passenger Boarding, New York (JFK) Airport, September, 1981.*



*Concorde Taxiing Away from the Terminal Building, New York (JFK) Airport, September, 1981.*



*The Machmeter Indicates that Concorde is Flying at Supersonic Speed – over the Atlantic, Sept., 1981.*



*At Home with Dad, Mum and Honey, Hatfield, England, September, 1981.*



*Barry and Monica Visit David and Susan Cross, Wolston, England, September, 1981.*