FROM THE LIONS DEN.

MAY 2015

“April is the cruelest month.” That is from T. S. Eliot, who wrote poetry that must be read with a commentary if it is to be understood at all. But even without a commentary, I can guess why April is a cruel month. It is filled with year-end reports, annual general meetings, election of new executives, and T-4 and T-5 slips for Revenue Canada. The Mayne Island Lions Club chose a new slate of officers this April, and I shall list them here so that my readers can congratulate them to they see them next. President is Bill Warning. First and second V-Ps are Brian Dearden and Wayne Ming. The secretary (as well as past-president) will be Richard Jarco. Maya Jordan will be assistant secretary. Mike Bullis will remain as treasurer and Millie Leathers will continue as membership chair. Al Mitchell, Bob Soper, Henry Till, Peter Hansche, Dave Chase and your scrivener who owns up to writing this column, fill out the list with assorted duties. The Nominating Committee presented the April General Meeting with this slate of nominees to not immoderate applause. They were duly elected and their names registered on the files of the Lions Club International computer. The new officers take office on July 1.

The raffle tickets for this year’s annual “222 Draw” have now been printed and will be on sale from mid-May. The money from the “222 Draw” this year will help fund the restoration pf the “Old Schoolhouse”, which the Mayne Island Volunteer Firemen’s Association has taken under its wing. The “Old Schoolhouse” is actually a replacement for Mayne Island’s first school, which was an over-sized shoe-box built for $200.00 in 1883, into which thirty-three pupils crowded to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. The first teacher was Mrs. Annie Monk, from Lanchashire via Ontario. Her portrait shows her as a proper lady with apprehension apparent on her face, perhaps with reason. She did not stay long. British Columbia has an ancient tradition of not wasting money on teachers’ salaries; for Mayne Island, the stipend was $50.00 a month. Ten years later, the present “Old School” was built, followed swiftly by the Plumper Pass lockup (1896) and St. Mary Magdalene church (1898). So Mayne Island ended the nineteenth century with three of the centres of island society well-served. The Lions believe that saving the earliest of them, the ‘Old Schoolhouse” is a worthy project.

Canada Day 2015 falls inconveniently in mid-week, but the calendar has no regard for national patriotisms. Last year’s celebration attracted a greater crowd than ever before. The ceremonial has evolved from a simple flag-raising formality, organized by the Royal Canadian Legion, which served hamburgers and hot dogs. The Lions took over the hamburger stand when the Legion faltered, but profits still went to the Legion. Then the Lions club moved its annual flea market to Canada Day; the local Terry Fox society added a market as well, and last year, the Silver Maynes organized an antiques and collectibles sale. Unsold items from the Lions market went to the Church Fair, but many remained behind that were unsaleable. By last year, the Lions Flea Market had evolved into a free junk removal service and the cost of removal cancelled out any profit from the market. For 2015, the Lions have decided against holding a flea market.

What should take its place? That will be up for discussion at the May General Meeting. All suggestions are welcome.

In the April “From the Lions Den” column I reported the arrival of the 2015 Mayne Island Phone Book in our mailboxes, and I expressed the thanks of the Lions Club to all the volunteers who worked on it. I hope that we can find a way to acknowledge everyone of them. But Lion Toby Snelgrove has reminded me that there are some who deserve more than a generalized expression of gratitude. Cliff Kiyooka and Bob Knapman were working on the book for twelve months, and Judi Walker assisted as well until illness forced her to withdraw. And of course, there is Toby Snelgrove himself, who tells me that he does not expect thanks for all the work he did, but will get it anyway. Thank-you, Toby. The annual Lions telephone directory is a labour-intensive project which would not make economic sense in a harsh dollars-and-cents world except that the volunteer worked for nothing. It is a valuable medium for local business, and it helps our island’s micro-economy. Remember to patronize the business establishments that have advertised in it.

I am writing this just after the conclusion of “Festival Active Pass.” On the back page of the programme the organizers acknowledge the festival’s sponsors, and the Mayne Island Lions Club is one of them. The steering committee that made the festival happen deserves the thanks of Mayne Island, and Galiano Island too, which will host the festival next year. The Lions applaud Michael Dunn, the chair of the volunteers who brought us “Festival Active Pass”.

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