

Let's Recap, 2017

October 21-22, 2017 Hear & Now at North Bramalea Presbyterian Church

This year the *Let's Recap* newsletter started early with Arni/Brian looking for Middle C on April 12th. He gave himself at least 6 months to achieve his objective. That should be enough time for the retired guy, don't you think. Trouble was, he put his Hear & Now stuff in boxes for the renovations, and somehow missed the e-mail with the list of what we would be singing, so it was not clear whether he actually had all the tools he needed to find that elusive Middle C. Time would tell.

Friday night was for catching up. Wendy had made a reservation at the restaurant in the hotel where many were staying. Said reservation was made 3 months in advance and came with a reminder 1 week before. This must be why they had only 1 chef in the kitchen and 1 server and not much recollection of a large group coming. We did manage to rearrange their tables so that 18 could be at one long table, and not two tables, which was much better for conversation.

Conversation, is that what you call it? Story telling would be more like it and there were a few cute stories. Tony and Sharon were the last to arrive, but that's because they live close by. And then the shocking news - Al had nominated Tony to direct us in his absence. Wait, or was it Tony that said that Al had said that Tony should direct us. Or was it Phil who said Tony should direct so he didn't have to hear the bass notes during his drum solos. Who knows the true story? But the shock was really all for Tony who madly practiced for the week leading up to the event, including trying to figure out how to play bass and electric guitar at the same time!

On the conversation/story-telling theme, here is what this reporter could hear from her seat:

- 🎵 Wendy said that she had a small mouth. Not sure why, but she then said if we believed her, she had a piece of property to sell us. This may require more investigation.
- 🎵 There were two weddings among the group this year. Well, sure, we all know that Barb and Richard were married 44 years ago on this very day, and Laura and Tom are married, and so are Brian and Cathy, and Pam and Kemp. The stories on this night were more of the next generation. Laura B's daughter and Pam's daughter were both married recently. Pictures were shared, very nice. Of particular note, Pam grew 150 succulents to give away at the wedding as favours, and also made 120 cupcakes, to replace the traditional wedding cake. Very industrious.
- 🎵 Richard was telling stories about his grandchildren, whom he loves very much. The oldest is 7 (no, 8 says Barb), and he is good friends with his cousin who is 4 (actually 5, says Barb). The next one down is 3 (that's correct says Barb) and the new one since last year is only 7 months old (actually 9 months but only Barb can count apparently). More pictures were shared.
- 🎵 Brian's bees made blueberry honey, even though the weather was a little dry this summer. This reporter thinks that some of the rain that hit Montréal and Toronto could have been shared with New Brunswick so that everyone would have had a nicer summer and the bees would have been happier. Tom later reported that the honey was indeed excellent.
- 🎵 The twins decided to take the plane instead of the train but somehow were not advised of travel restrictions on liquids. They unfortunately had to check a bag so as to avoid having their toiletries thrown in the garbage.
- 🎵 Phil was in TMI mode this evening, and it was hard for this reporter to follow. One of the stories revolved around when he was a Virgin and when he was not. 1968 – not; 1971 – was; 1973 - definitely not (if anyone understood this story, this reporter will print a correction). And then there was something about the Aurora Gorge, oh how he loved that place, back in 1973! Wendy loves it too, but she was not precise as to the exact dates.

- 🎵 There was apparently a Choo Choo bar in Guelph back in the late 1960's and it was known to Phil and his friends, particularly John who had long hair and was 6 foot 3 at 16, as a place that served young people (young as in underage). They used to drive down from Fergus and sit in the back, trying not to draw attention to themselves. That was until the locals called John a girl. That was it, a brawl broke out until the bar owner called the police. The local police came down with sirens blazing. Of course, young people have excellent hearing, so they were able to make their escape quickly and avoid detection. End of brawl but we are assuming the long hair remained.
- 🎵 And what was that story about Phil's mom who wanted to blow the bagpipes, followed by a colourful word in French. More investigation is clearly needed.

Back to dinner, and the staff shortage. We arrived a 7pm, drink orders were finally taken around 7:30pm and when the menus arrived we had to share. Food arrived shortly before 9pm. Good thing too because some of us were getting pretty hungry. We must remember to share with Trip Advisor that onion soup should not be made with unmelted process cheese and canned soup broth, and hamburgers should not be served if they have reached the hockey puck stage. The fries were apparently good.

The server did manage to get everyone the right bills and she was still smiling at the end of the evening. We sang a verse of Carol of the Bells, just to prove that we really were a singing group. Of course, the drummer chose the song. He obviously was confused about the seasons - it felt like summer outside and we were singing a Christmas tune. Next time, we will have to ask the bass-player-come-leader to choose.

And with that, everyone went their separate ways, to get their beauty sleep before the 1pm rehearsal on Saturday.

Saturday is rehearsal day, which is always fun. Laura B. had prepared an order of services including the congregational hymns (yes, two, not one Phil, just like last year; remember?). So wonderfully organized. Tony brought 2 guitars - this reporter was completely unaware that Tony the bass player could also play electric guitar. Wow! The drums were set up in a corner, still in the church sanctuary, but in a corner, and the piano was moved closer to the sopranos (sopranos love the piano and the piano player, sorry altos).

First song, first run-through, was very rough indeed. Richard, our personal listener and coach, said we sounded a little rough, maybe 50%. Try it again. Better, but still not right, maybe 60%. A little more confidence on the entries was needed. And, we needed to end together. Tony was giving cut-offs, until he forgot, and Arnie was helping with entries and as the afternoon wore on, we got more organized.

Around 3pm, as most of the band needed "fresh air" and the rest of the group was running low on energy, we took a little break. Laura B produced some great snacks and Jean treated us to bacon butter tarts. Don't knock them, they were really good. The best break story that this reporter heard was the broken toilet that led to a change of room for Wendy and Judy. Yes, I really mean a broken toilet, the kind that happens in the middle of the night. Whose fault – that is up for discussion as this reporter understands it.

OK, back to work! Let's run through everything again. Oh wait, the Church organist is here. So let's learn the congregational hymns. Run through, done except for I Believe in Music - Tony and Brian are still trying to work out the intro. Tom says he is a little nervous if during the last run-through the band is still working out the intro. No worries, it will be great on the day. Richard's assessment – 90%.

Rehearsal wrapped around 5pm, and then we had the traditional parking lot discussion for another half hour. Some went back to their hotel/house for a rest and some just killed time before dinner, scheduled for 7pm. Boston Pizza this time, table for 18 please.

For dinner, there were actually 2 tables. One table dubbed themselves the "adult" table but that was questioned since Phil was sitting at that table. The other table was just that, the other table. Food was good, service was quick, and we didn't have to locate our menus, or even share menus. They even managed to produce separate bills without fuss, and there were at least 2 servers. Good idea Wendy.

What did this reporter learn today, in addition to the fact that the bass player can really play electric guitar:

- 🎵 That Judy joined the Hear & Now because Tim Dolla severely twisted her arm (seems to be ok now, after 40+ years) and that this happened in secondary 5 (or grade 11 as it was called back then); this turned out to be the fall of 1972.
- 🎵 That when the bees swarm because there are too many in the hive, the beekeeper (in this case our beloved piano player) can walk among them in shorts and not get stung.
- 🎵 That Tony has a degree in Film and Music and has a job working in television; pretty neat; also, he is working at automating television, which makes other jobs in the industry obsolete but not his own; good job Tony. Very smart.
- 🎵 That if you need new spare parts for your body, ask Sharon as her company deals in replacement joints (knees, elbows, wrists, etc.).
- 🎵 That Kemp has a really nice voice (he was standing behind this reporter for the rehearsal).
- 🎵 That the men, when asked to sing on their own, prefer to sing to the floor; come on guys, sing out, and look happy.
- 🎵 That this reporter needs to redistribute the names for the faces in THE photo again; and that she also needs to bring a copy of said document every year, since it invariably comes up (as in, "who is that standing behind Glen with the plaid pants?")
- 🎵 That Brian's daughter and grandson Beau will be attending the service; is this the first 3rd generation sighting for the Hear and Now?
- 🎵 That Laura B. and Laura P. must have some kind of psychic powers, since both were wearing the same colour shirts for rehearsal, and were the bookends on either end of the front row of singers. Also, neither like the taste of coffee, but both like the smell. Interesting.

But Saturday would not be complete without a Wendy story. This reporter was not on hand to witness this first-hand but the second-hand accounts all agree on the details. Wendy unfortunately fell into a bush in front of the hotel entrance. There were 2 gentlemen sitting on the patio drinking who witnessed the event, but made no move to help her. This was left to a passing gentleman, concerned for her health, who asked her if she was injured. Wendy's response was "no, just my pride". He then helped her up. The two drinkers never moved. Maybe they were blind? Wendy however was concerned that she was "losing her touch with the men". You will have to check with her for more details on that one. Could this be related to the glass boot incident from 2013?

Sunday's services were very lovely, and educational too. Dr. Laura B. demonstrated that it was possible to support 6 hymn books on a single piece of paper, rolled into a tube. And this science trick was actually a message to the kids about how God helps and supports everyone. Tom's message was an excellent reminder too – God gives his people strength, hope, love and peace. A message for us all to remember, for sure. And of critical important, and not specifically related to the service itself, there was photographic evidence that Tom plays acoustic guitar. Who knew?

So, as we again “*go now in peace*”, remember to “*listen to your children praying*”. The “*world will be a better place*” when we “*learn to love each other*” so that there can be peace on earth when we “*put an end to war*”. We all “*believe in music*”, as was illustrated by our participation in this weekend of fellowship and friendship. Until next year friends.

This reporter thanks The Band once again for exemplary work. You guys excel time and time again and we sure couldn't do this without you. And yes, Brian was able to find Middle C. And Tony did a great job juggling those guitars.

*My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Love is lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

*Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing;
It sounds and echoes in my soul; how can I keep from singing?
Robert Lowry (1826-1899)*

Requests/thoughts for next year:

- 🎵 Can we sing Desiderata, with Tom doing the narrative? (Brian's request)
- 🎵 Can we think of a way to have more social time? We need more time to catch up and tell stories.
- 🎵 Can we retype the song sheet for A Gift of Song so that it has two verses? (Laura's request)
- 🎵 2018 will be our 10th year – what can we do special?

Attendees:

Dave, Keith, Laura P., Richard, Pam, Judy, Jean, Cathy, Phil, Brian, Kim, Wendy, Barb, Kemp, Laura B., Tom, Sharon, Tony

Repertoire:

Put a little love
One man's tongue
Last night I had the strangest dream
Fly little white dove fly
A Gift of Song
Go now in peace
I believe in Music

Praise Selections (a.k.a. hymns):

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
Gather us in (verse 1)
God gives his people strength
Lord listen to your children praying
Speak, O Lord
Woman in the night

Appendix:

Middle C: Middle C is the name given to the musical note C which is in the middle of the piano keyboard. It is not actually quite the middle note of the keyboard, but very nearly, and of all the Cs on the piano it is the one nearest to the middle. *Does this help Brian?*

Onion Soup: French onion soup is a type of soup usually based on meat stock and onions, and often served gratinéed with croutons and cheese on top or a large piece of bread. Onion soups have been popular at least as far back as Roman times. Throughout history, they were seen as food for poor people, as onions were plentiful and easy to grow. The modern version of this soup originates in Paris, France in the 18th century, made from beef broth, and caramelized onions. It is often finished by being placed under a grill in a ramekin with croutons and Comté (type of French cheese) melted on top.

Richard, do you think we should tell the restaurant?