

MAGEE HIGH SCHOOL REUNION
Royal Vancouver Yacht Club
Saturday, May 28th, 2005

Bill Climie's Presentation (as recorded in his mind)

Good evening folks.

Guy or Pat, could we have someone raise the blinds so we can admire the view, now that the sun has set?

While we're waiting for that to happen, I'd like to comment on a couple of points raised in the previous presentations. First, Sharon, you made reference to Miss Langridge. One recollection of an encounter with her went something like this, "Climie, would you like to be in the school play next year?". Answer, "No, Miss Langridge". Next question, "Climie would you like to graduate?". Answer, "Yes, Miss Langridge". "Now, let me repeat the first question, would you like to be in the school play next year?". "Yes, Miss Langridge".

Shelley, you made reference to "brains" in your comments. It reminded me of one of my favourite quotations from Robin Williams, "God gave man a brain and a penis, but only enough blood to run one at a time".

"Now for something completely different" (as John Cleese used to say).

Travel with me now to the East coast to St. John's, Newfoundland, where I was on a business trip many years ago. We were about to sit down for lunch, when our host decided to introduce us to our waiter. He pointed to us and said "They're from away".

Up until that time, I had always thought I was from Vancouver, but now I was "from away". What an apt description. You were either from the "Rock" or from "away".

It occurred to me that I've been "from away" most of my adult life; in Winnipeg, in Edmonton, in Don Mills, Burlington or Markham, Ontario.

So what was it about growing up in Vancouver in general, and Kerrisdale in particular that influenced my life?

MEMORIES OF THE EARLY YEARS

- Radio programs that encouraged you to send away for your very own "Sky King Decoder Ring" (I think it had a turquoise stone).
- The Vancouver Province Tillicum Club with the neat, silver totem pin, and the secret greeting, "KLA HOW YA Tillicum!" They published your name in the paper on your birthday, but, as luck would have it, there was a typo which appeared as Bill Blimie. Dick Johnston's mother had a good laugh at that.
- Ross Mortimer was the host of a noon hour show called "Kiddies Corner" on CJOR, and the theme song was "The Teddy Bear's Picnic". Guy Walters cursed me for reminding him of this recently, as he had just finally gotten "If you go down to the woods today..." out of his mind, and now its back.

- I remember riding our bikes to the airport, and that futuristic rocket model in front of the terminal. I understand that it has been relocated to the South end of the Cambie Bridge.
- I remember building a fort, but not your normal fort that most kids build from scraps. Arnie Bennett's Mom picked us up after school in her yellow Packard convertible, that was partially filled with new lumber, from Bennett Construction, and she delivered us, and the lumber, to the "construction site" in the bush on the West side of Arbutus, North of the Quilchena Golf Course.
- I remember taking a trip to Boundary Bay via the Ladner ferry in our neighbours 1947 Studebaker. We used to hang out at the roller rink and play the 5¢ pinball machines.
- I recall taking the BCE Interurban (tram for short) to the old Capilano Stadium and paying 25¢ to sit in the right field bleachers to watch Ray and Len Tran turn a double play, or cheer the lanky fastballer, Bob Costello. When we couldn't make it to the game, we listened to the play by play of Hal Rodd at CKMO, sponsored by Home Oil.

THE BUSINESSES OF KERRIDALE

We knew the names of all of the merchants, and they knew ours.

Let's stroll up West Boulevard to 41st.

First, at 37th was the Esso station run by Colin Virteau and his son, Murray. Do you remember the red Spanish tile on the roof of the old station?

Across the street was "Pop" Warner's drug store. After a game of "Mark" football at Point Grey, we'd go over to the pop cooler, slide back the top, and choose a KIK Cola, a Hires Root Beer, a Jersey Cream Soda, or maybe even an Orange Crush, in the brown crinkle bottle.

Further along the Boulevard we'd pass Vic the Butcher, and Mary's Confectionery. Then there was an apple orchard at 39th. Between 40th and 41st was Ted the barber, who gave us our crew cuts.

Heading West on 41st, we'd pass the Woolworth's 5¢ and 10¢, where Keith Codling's Mom, Minnie worked. Further along were the Chinese green grocers; Superior Produce and Bing's Market, and then The Vanity.

Across 41st, at Yew, was Dockstader Motors, run by Pete and his sons, Bill and Don. They featured Anglias and Prefects, and later, Morris Minors. Smell the fresh bread as we pass Moore's Bakery. At the Kerrisdale Theatre, we'd find the cashier, Miss Gage in the cage. What a battle axe! Then, of course, the Avenue Grill, followed by Osbourne's Department Store, and the Bank of Montreal where Rosemary Wilson (Muriel's sister) worked.

East of the tracks, on the North side was the Spudnut Shop, and across on the South side, was Ivor Williams Sporting Goods. With Ivor around, we didn't need Michael Jackson (or a Catholic priest) since John McDiarmid tells me that Ivor delighted in fitting young boys for their first "cup".

Then back on the North side was the bowling alley, where we set pins for 5¢ a line. We used to hang around outside afterwards and harass the "Village Idiot", Frank, and his sidekick, "Greasy Bill". We hadn't yet learned to be politically correct.

The Kerrisdale Arena was our entertainment centre.

The Friday night Public Skate, usually involved a couple of Lucky Lagers on the hill first.

The hockey team was the "Kerrisdale Monarchs"

The Lacrosse teams were: The Vancouver Burrards (with native Stan Joseph in goal)

The Nanaimo Timbermen (with tough guy Jack Bionda)

The Victoria Shamrocks (with nobody notable)

And the oddest sports name of all: The New Westminster Salmonbellies

There were concerts too, but not U2. We had Spike Jones and his City Slickers.

On the ball field next to the arena, we used to watch the Major Women's Fastball league, especially the tall, black windmill pitcher, Ethyl Ramsay.

On one occasion we had the touring "King and His Court" perform there. The "King" was Eddie Feigner, who pitched, and the other three in his "Court" played catcher, first base, and outfield. Four against nine; and they always won.

ENGLISH BAY

Smell the hot, buttered popcorn in the vendor's carts (the ones with the big bicycle tires).

Look up at the neon sign on the Sylvia Hotel, inviting you to "Dine in the Sky", 8 stories up. Now walk up to the corner of Davie and Denman where the BCE open observation street car is stopped while Ted Lyons speaks through his megaphone, pointing out the sights to the tourists on board.

TIME TO WRAP UP

Pretend you're at your friend's house and you have to call home to ask if you can stay for dinner. You pick up the receiver and a voice says "Number please". What do you say?

If you were me, you'd say "Kerrisdale 3146-L".

Quickly now, a list of a few things that no longer exist:

The Cascades Drive-In Theatre

Digney Speedway

\$1.49 Day Woodward's

Valley Lumber

Oscars

Foncies Fotos

The Palomar Supper Club

Isy's

The Owl Prowl

The 10¢ malts in the Bay basement, next to the escalator

The Aristocrat Restaurant at Broadway and Granville

Shurpass Pacific College (how'd you like that on your CV?)

The Milky Way

Shannon Dairies

The Ding Ho Chinese Drive-In Restaurant chain
The News Herald

Enough, already!

Now that I'm officially a senior, I sometimes get asked if I believe in the hereafter. My standard reply is, "Most assuredly, on a daily basis, I'll enter a room, look around, and scratch my head and say, now, what was I here after?"

When we, as a committee, were discussing some of the things that exist today, that were not present way back then, Bob Tulk volunteered "Viagra". I don't know if you been following the news these past couple of days, but apparently there is some evidence that some users are experiencing blindness as a result of taking Viagra. Well, I can recall about 55 years ago being told not to do a certain thing, as it might lead to blindness. And now this. It just isn't fair!

Yes, I **was** from away.

But I'm home now.

And I intend to stay!