



Winter 2004

Issue 7



The Patchwork

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Farwell to Laverne Martin

by: *The Life Skills Girls*

If you go into ARC Industries on any given day, you will notice several things: lots of productive clients working on contracts, the phone ringing often, some laughter and music and busy diligent staff supervising all of the hubbub and keeping the peace. Helping things to run smoothly is one of the quietest staff, Laverne Martin who is retiring at the end of January. Laverne has been supervising and instructing clients for almost 14 years. Starting at ARC Industries in May of 1989, Laverne has seen a lot of changes over the years. Clients maturing, moving on, new participants coming in, new staff and shifts in management too. Laverne has regularly carried a caseload of 15 individuals guiding and directing them in their various jobs at ARC. Laverne's good-natured, sense of humour and his laid back attitude have made him a success

while working in a female dominated environment. Lucky or cursed? Only Laverne can answer that one! Laverne has been our country van driver for most of his time with the Association. He has been able to maneuver the bus in all kinds of weather, in all sizes of driveways and has a great rapport with all of his passengers. He drives with great care ensuring safety but also with a great cheery disposition. Over the years, Laverne has also volunteered in many capacities for the Agency at the Quilt Auction, the Maple Syrup Festival, as a van driver for Recreation outings and leading us in song at our Christmas Parties.

All the staff know they can turn to Lavern for any wood products. He has made cabinets, birdhouses, a bed, a porch, benches and picnic

tables for various staff and the group homes. We all appreciate his craftsmanship and his ability to make things effortlessly.

Laverne is looking forward to his upcoming retirement (although he assures us he has always liked his job.) It will give him more time to focus on his woodworking , travelling with his wife Norma and babysitting with his 4 grandchildren. ARC Industries and EDACL will miss Laverne but we are happy that he is moving on to this phase in his life and we wish him and his family much happiness.

Please join us January 29th, 2004 from 1 pm to 3 pm at ARC Industries for an Open House in Laverne Martin's honour.

Upcoming Events

- Maple Syrup Festival
April 3, 2004
- Annual Valentine's Dance
February



Camping Adventure

by: Bob Johnstone



It was a warm September afternoon when Glenn Biesinger, Frank Biesinger, and Raymond Moser left with staff, Bob Johnstone, for three days of camping at Pinehurst Park near Paris, Ontario. This was the first opportunity for Glenn, Frank and Ray to get away overnight this summer and it was a good time for all of us. The weather even stayed quite mild throughout the night.

Upon arrival at the campground everyone helped in putting up the tents and in getting organized. This was Raymond's first camping experience but he helped as if he had gone camping many times before. Glenn and Frank got the campfire ready and we all relaxed roasting hot dogs and marshmallows. As the evening continued on we had several visits from some of the local wildlife. A racoon and a couple of chipmunks came to share some of our provisions. We even had a very brief visit from a fox that wandered onto

our campsite.

As a group we discussed what we would like to do the next day and we were all in agreement that we would go to Port Dover. We began by going on a boat cruise along the river that leads through the town. It was quite a nice trip that offered us the opportunity to see both nature and also to see how the 'rich and famous live'.

After a delicious lunch of fish and chips at a patio located next to the beach, we went for a walk and explored the local stores. Raymond was feeling a bit tired so he had a sleep on the beach for about an hour while the rest of us went swimming in Lake Erie. The water was quite shallow and allowed us all to go quite a distance from shore and still be able to stand. Frank is known for being quite athletic but when it comes to swimming he excels. It is amazing to watch him swim underwater and to see him come to the surface

about twenty to thirty feet away from where he started.

We finished our time at Port Dover by visiting the Maritime Museum. The museum is actually quite large and spacious and we all enjoyed looking at the various exhibits. One of the volunteers gave us a tour and pointed out the more interesting features. Glenn took particular note of an exhibit with Popeye as the main character. Our guide was amazed that we would know who he is and informed us that we all must be older than we look.

The following morning Glenn helped to make bacon and eggs over the campfire. We worked together to take down our tents and pack up for the drive back to Elmira. After stopping for lunch we spent the afternoon shopping at a number of stores. It was a good time for all of us with Glenn, Frank, and Raymond all saying that they would like to go camping again next year.



30th Annual Quilt Auction

by: Sue Lehman

Thanks again to all the volunteers, buyers and auctioneers for coming out and supporting us!

October 25th, 2003 marked the 30th anniversary of the Charity Quilt Auction and Country Market in support of the Elmira & District Association for Community Living. This year the Auction was held in a new location, the Riverdale Poultry Express, west of Elmira. As in other years, there was a huge bake table, silent auction, craft table and lunch counter. The Auction featured new and used furniture and equipment, as well

as more than 130 quilts and hand-made pieces. One particular quilt was made in honour of the 30th Anniversary. It was a triple Irish chain design featuring artwork created by clients of the Association. There was also a quilt donated through a Quilt Block Challenge sponsored by the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival. As well, there was a raffle for hand-made pieces. The quilt was won by Brenda

Peters of Innisfil, the wall hanging won by Shawn Siak from Langley BC, and a carpet strip won by Brenda Shah from Niagara-on-the-lake.

This year the Auction raised more than \$70,000 to support programs and services for local individuals with a developmental delay and their families. Thank you so much to everyone who supported this event!

A Very Special Gift

by: Laurie Thomson



On January 4, 2004, Louise Ellis, along with her mom Karen, will embark on the most wonderful journey. They will be travelling to China with 45 other families, to receive the most cherished gift of all... a baby. Louise has been working with the Children's Bridge, an international adoption agency out of Ottawa, to make this

dream come true, and after years of planning, saving and experiencing hope and disappointment, Louise will finally be able to hold her new daughter and take her home. January 9, 2004 is the official adoption date and we couldn't be more excited for her. The flight home will be interesting for everyone, as all of the

families will be returning with their babies as well, and that includes a set of twins! Olivia Mae Xiang Hui Ellis will make her debut in Canada on January 21st and from the picture you can tell that she will be a star! What a cutie! Best of luck and good wishes to Louise and her daughter Olivia.

In Search of Leprechauns

by: Laurie Thomson



For the past 4 years, a group of 17-20 adults with disabilities from the country of Ireland, have participated in an exchange program with Canada. They arrive in Cambridge with their support staff, are welcomed into various host family homes, go to work at area employers who have offered them work experience opportunities, go sight seeing, shopping and participate in a lot of fun and educational activities to help them learn about life as a Canadian. After 6 weeks, they return to their homes with a sense of independence and confidence at having lived and worked successfully, away from their family and friends in an entirely new country! The one thing missing from this project that would make it truly an 'exchange' program, is

to send a group of Canadians back to Ireland to participate in all of the things that the Irish group had experienced while in Canada. And so, the Elmira Association has been approached to see if this is something that we would be interested in taking on. I have been offered the wonderful opportunity to oversee the process from beginning to end and then accompany the group as the support staff. Four adults supported by the Elmira Association and another from Cambridge, have been selected according to their abilities to be independent, able to go out on work experience placements without constant staff supervision, help out around the homes of their host families and have the community and social skills needed to be accepted and

successful while away from home. They are; Sheila Herteis, Janine Haid, Mark Allison, Michele LaReau and Jamie O'Brien. All have excitedly accepted the challenge of the adventure, and already collecting information and photographs about Ireland. Now begins the most daunting part of the process. We hope to raise approximately \$12,000 to \$15,000 dollars to cover the airfare, transportation costs while in Ireland, plus any of the other miscellaneous, day to day expenses that will occur. The trip is planned for the month of September of 2004, so we have some work to do. But I'm sure that with the enthusiastic group behind it all, we will be successful in reaching our goal!

A Bus for Christmas

by: Laurie Thomson



It might not be *your* idea of the best Christmas gift ever, but for the clients who have ridden the old Thomas Bus twice daily for the past few years, as it bumps and rattles along on a whisper and a prayer, and with very little heat in the winter, it is a Christmas wish come true!

Venah and Laverne are also very happy to have something warm and comfortable to drive and it sure makes their jobs a lot more enjoyable. The 2003 Ford Bus is white with aqua blue accents, has 3 heaters spaced throughout and a CD player so that everyone can

hear their favourite music. It seats 10 people, and has tie downs for 5 wheelchairs as well as a jump seat that can be moved in or out to accommodate an extra passenger. Merry Christmas!

Staff Recognition Awards

by: Amy Habermehl

5 Years

Sheryl Martin
Kathleen Wickie

10 Years

Cheryl McTaggart
Sheri Dowdall

15 Years

Greg Bechard
Donna Fulcher
Rodger Hanna
Karen Marche
Cindy Prince Briggs
Laurie Thomson
Norma Martin

The Elmira & District Association for Community Living would like to recognize our dedicated staff who have reached the milestones of 5, 10, and 15 years with us.

This year we had two employees celebrating 5 years with EDACL. Kathleen Wickie who works a part time contract at Reid Woods and Sheryl Martin who is one of the full time overnight attendants at Reid Woods.

Cheryl McTaggart celebrated her 10th year working for the Association, she is the primary counsellor at Crane Drive.

EDACL is extremely fortunate to have the following 7 staff members for 15 years. Donna Fulcher who is our Vocational Manager, Rodger Hanna one of our Residential Managers, Karen Marche our Resource Teacher, Cindy Prince Briggs one of our full time staff at Life Skills, Laurie Thomson our Human Resource person,

Norma Martin works part time at Riverside, and last but not least our very own Executive Director Greg Bechard.

Unfortunately last year we overlooked a very important staff member and her 10 year anniversary. Sheri Dowdall has worked in many important roles within the Association and is now working as an overnight attendant at Crane Drive. We apologize for missing you last year Sheri.

A Fond Farewell

by: Laverne Martin

What can escape the hands of time?

Its touch affects the world

From canyons deep to mountain peaks

Times' beauty is unfurled.

Time measures out the years for man

With reasons and their rolls.

With some comes joy, with some comes stress

Time seems to take it's toll.

The rest of that poem related the different aspects of life to the seasons. I can hardly believe that I am already in my Autumn of life. Time at ARC has been an enriching and meaningful experience for me. There have been rough edges worn down and at the same time there was a constant build up of good experiences that will long be remembered.

Patience was a constant ebb and flow with the reservoir at times running low then timely pieces of encouragement makes it all worth while.

Thanks Rosie for your

relentless interest in me.

Thanks to Isabel for always bringing me coffee and praying for me at Church on Sundays. Thanks Jim for sharing the dog house with me, your humor makes my day. It was good working in the back room on headsets with Dawn, Bevis and Elizabeth. You really "went to town" a lot Bevis. I marvel at the fact that in spite of physical and mental limitations there can still be so much joy and happiness and fun. I feel fortunate to have a job where I can hopefully be helping to make some peoples lives more meaningful. I am grateful for all the expressions of appreciation I would get in a variety of ways. I'll always remember a hug I got from one fellow. He held on so long and so tight I wasn't sure how to respond. I knew his feelings were genuine but I think I understood much more a while later when I was doing his eulogy at his funeral. I miss you Andy. He was just one of the precious lives that are gone.

I will always treasure the relationships I had with ARC staff. This includes you too June and Laurie. I think we have contributed a lot to each other laughing, crying and yes working together. Calming down anxieties, settling disputes tending to seizures, correcting contracts with mistakes and teaching people new contracts was a big part of a normal day.

We also shared some very appreciative letters from parents. Bringing joy and fulfillment to the lives of the people we work with, makes it all worth while. I don't feel worthy of all the appreciative things I am hearing lately. I hope I could bring something positive to the people around me.

Thank you for making my stay at ARC such a pleasant and enriching experience.

Sincerely

Laverne

Recreation Update

The EDACL Recreation Committee continues through another busy fall/Christmas season. Our biggest venture to date, the "In the Kitchen with EDACL" our first ever cookbook turned into a great achievement. Families, residents, staff and friends submitted recipes, which made the cookbook the success we, as a committee, had hoped for. Hot off the presses at Quilt Auction time, the cookbooks sold quickly. AND WE ARE SOLD OUT. But don't dismay, we hope to run more in the New Year. If you know that you are in need of a copy please phone admin and pre-order so that you are guaranteed a cookbook.

In the fall we held our annual Halloween Dinner and Dance

at the Legion and we had a good turn out. Lots of happy Goblins entertaining us and winning door prizes. Big congratulations to Geri Reid who won the fall wreath created by the talented Brenda Johnston.

Our Christmas Cheese fundraiser was also a success again this year proving that you can never have enough cheese.

As well, our Annual Christmas raffle at the Staff & Committee Dinner was well supported and all the winners were happy with their prizes.

At print time, we are just entering the busy Christmas hubbub and all of our clients are eagerly awaiting the Annual Client Christmas Party and the arrival of the Bierdo Brothers.

who entertain us year after year. Of course, having Santa himself drop by in the afternoon ensures the day is a big hit. Lots of food, fellowship, fun and a gift from Jolly old Saint Nick is a day we all look forward to.

In the New Year, we will continue to be busy planning events, fundraisers and activities. Some of the ideas on the agenda are; our movie/pizza nights, a trip to the Rainforest Café in Toronto, Valentine's Dance and/or Spring Fling Dance and the anticipation of planning for the summer events. It all helps to keep the winter months short (at least busy) while we await the new season and what it will bring.



Spotlight on Joyce Weber

Joyce calls everyone 'Sunshine', but the term very easily describes **her**. She is a vibrant, happy, outgoing lady with a bright, sunny smile! So friendly, too. No wonder everyone she meets, likes her immediately.

Joyce has worked at ARC Industries since June of 1991, where her skills in the bridal department are a huge asset. She helps decorate wedding favours by tying and curling ribbons and adding silk flowers or any other decorations as

ordered by the brides. She also works on many of the other contracts at ARC, and when her own work is done, often offers to help any of her co-workers with theirs. Joyce also has worked in the community at a variety of part-time positions and recently received a beautiful gift from Pilgrims Provident Home, where she has been an employee for 10 years! Joyce enjoys many sports and participates in Special Olympic events such as bowling and

baseball. She loves music and brings in tapes and C.D.'s to share with those at work. Because she is such a social butterfly, she attends most of the leisure activities planned by the recreation committee and enjoys being 'out and about' as much as possible. If you see her riding her bike in the summer, give her a wave. You will be rewarded with the most brilliant smile in return!

Joyce lives with two of her sisters in Elmira.

by: Laurie Thomson



Joyce Weber



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Our Mission

“The members of the association recognize and support all persons in need of our care living within the townships of Woolwich, Wellesley, Peel, and Mapleton in order that they may live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community and have the opportunity to participate effectively.”

If we can help don't hesitate to call

We're on the Web!
www.elmiracl.com

Board & Executive Committee Members

Executive Committee:

Wayne Turpel—President

Wayne Martin—1st Vice President

Henry Weber—Treasurer

George Pfanner—Director at Large

Elmer Brubacher—Director at Large

Board Members:

Wayne Turpel—President

Larry Biesinger—Past President

Elmer Brubacher

Colin Brubacher

Marie Brubacher

Martin DeCorte

Monika Landoni

Wayne Martin

Sam Martin

George Pfanner

Ken Walter

Henry Weber

Greg Bechard - Executive Director