



Alere Flammam

The newsletter of the Lisgar Alumni Association
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Three Decades Caring for School and Students

Hailing originally from St. Lucia, Marie Dixon has served for 30 years as a member of the care staff at Lisgar, connecting over that time with several generations of students and teachers. She regards them as her family, she says, explaining that she has little actual family in this country. Having well passed her twenty-five year mark at the school, Marie became a member of Lisgar's Quarter Century Club at her retirement this year.

Marie speaks with nostalgia and some pride of having worked with six principals and six building superintendents and supervisors. It was one of



QUARTER CENTURY: Marie Dixon poses with the plaque outside the library now bearing her name.

the latter, she says, Mike Tysick, who persuaded her to start working an eight-hour day instead of her customary five and a half—as a result, she

was able to gain benefits, she explains, and she is grateful to him to this day for his sage advice.

But it is clear that her work was more than a job to Marie—she took pride in working hard and getting the job done, but that never prevented her from chatting it up with teachers and students as she did so. She can tell you which teacher liked pineapple upside down cake, banana bread, or some other specialty from her St. Lucian cuisine to which she treated a favoured few at Christmas. And she knew how this teacher liked his desk placed, took

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Two Well-Loved Lisgar Social Sciences Teachers Retire

Two long-time members of the Social Sciences Department retired from teaching in June.

Ruth Crabtree arrived at Lisgar to head the Department in 1997. With a geography degree, she had wanted to be an urban planner, but was advised that social work, government work, and teaching would be more accessible. Having taught for a few years in England, she came to Canada in 1979 as a young married woman, and initially did market research at Ogilvy's department store. Before finally taking up full-time teaching at adult day school, she taught juvenile delinquents

at a correctional institute.

Active outside the classroom, she was teacher adviser to the Lisgar Environmental Action Force, known as LEAF, and to the Reach for the Top team, which won many competitions, nationally and internationally, under her tutelage. She continues in this latter role in her retirement, visiting the school each week to share her inspiration and expertise.

Paul Turner arrived at Lisgar in 1998. He had spent two years traveling in Europe, working on a kibbutz in Israel, and roughing it in gold mining in northern Ontario before completing a History and Political Science degree at Carleton and eventually teaching at Gloucester High School. At the same time, he pursued an avid interest in Iron Man, competing in his first in Hawaii in 1984. He also worked with juvenile delinquents early in his career, before teaching.

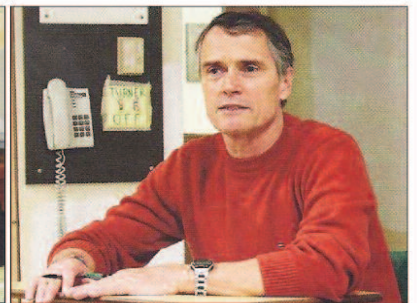
Former student Milena Gonzalez (2008), in a tribute to him through Stanford University's Teacher Tribute

Initiative, indicated that the goal of her Grade 12 Philosophy class “became to come up with a well-supported argument to which Mr. Turner would have

no rebuttal, to the point where you would smile before speaking, already knowing that you would not succeed.” Iron man in more ways than one! ■



CRABTREE



TURNER

They're History!

(...and Geography, and Politics, and Philosophy, and World Issues, and REACH, and LEAF, and so much more)

Join us for a toast to our two great friends and colleagues. Ruth and Paul

CHEEKY POSTER: Colleagues organized a party for retiring teachers Ruth Crabtree and Paul Turner.

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Members' Forum

Barbara Joe and Geoff Erskine sent in donations in honour of their three children, Graham (2008), Jennifer (2010), and Jamie (2013), as this will be the last year they will attend Lisgar: Lisgar has truly been their second home, the place to meet their closest friends, try many different things, experience so many opportunities, and build the base for all future endeavours. All of them have been extensively involved in the school, including music, band trips, outdoor education, school council, dances, musicals, pancake breakfasts, and many sports. As our way of saying thank you and hopefully leaving something for future students, please find the enclosed donations towards the music and athletic programs, as well as a donation toward replacing the benches in the mall.

Patricia Ackerman (1950) wrote: Thank you for sending the Alere Flamman. I love and appreciate it.

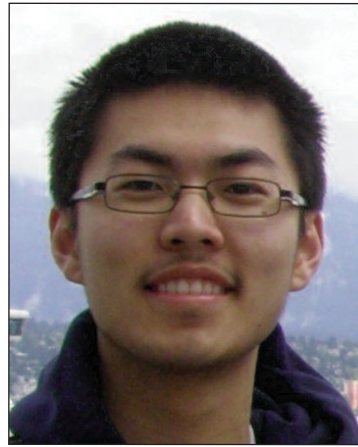
Philippe Roy (1962) e-mailed: I was attending a 60th anniversary event locally last evening, and was totally surprised when I met a former classmate, Patricia Cassidy (1962). We recalled that we were also alumni of Osgoode St. Public School (1956). So we got a couple of glasses of wine and

had a great old chat! Patricia became a teacher and taught at several Ottawa region schools.

Robert Wellwood (1950) added a note to his membership renewal: I moved over three years ago and did not send my new address. I'm still alive!

Janet Rideout (Wells, 1983) wrote: Please accept this donation in memory of my uncle, Grant Cawsey (1958), who passed away last summer. Grant was a huge supporter of all the Lisgar reunions, and whenever he came to visit Ottawa he always wanted to walk around the Lisgar campus. I would like to direct the donation to the Athletic Department, as Uncle Grant was a great athlete and his is the first name on the Donald McNabb trophy at Lisgar.

Bailey Gu (2013) was awarded the D. Aubrey Moodie Award by the Ottawa Carleton District School Board, for achieving the highest average of any graduating student in the Board. Bailey's achievement marks the second year in a row the honour has gone to a Lisgar student—the previous year's award was given to Sandro Young (2012). The award was one of many award-



TOP OTTAWA GRAD: Bailey Gu (2013).

ed to Bailey over his years at Lisgar. He was well known to all for his intense interest and abilities in many areas of math and science, and in summer 2013 was selected to attend the International Physics Olympiad. Flown first to Cambridge University for a few days of preparation with the British team and then on to Copenhagen, he proudly represented Canada and won a bronze medal. Bailey is now studying Physics at the University of Waterloo.

Vivienne Macy (1998) e-mailed to share that fellow alumna Saleema Nawaz (1997) has published her first novel, Bone and Bread. She and her novel have received rave reviews. Of particular interest to alumni will be the description of the

high school where some of the action takes place. To read more, see <http://arts.nationalpost.com/tag/saleema-nawaz/>

In response to the article on Mary Tsai (1986) receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, Paul Ingram (1952) wrote to share that he too had received the award.

Ravi Malbotra (1989) and Morgan Rowe (2004) have published a new book on disability rights. Exploring Disability Identity and Disability Rights through Narratives: Finding a Voice of Their Own explores the lives of people with disabilities through narratives and makes some policy suggestions with respect to issues such as education, transportation, and employment. Ravi is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, Common Law Section, at the University of Ottawa, and is proud to have several other Lisgarites as colleagues. He has been disabled since birth. Morgan Rowe is a lawyer at a law firm specializing in representing unions in labour, employment, and human rights law in Ottawa, and also has a journalism degree from Carleton University.

Fred Costin (1968) e-mailed: It may be of interest to the gang of the '60s that the Mayflower Restaurant at Elgin

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1965 MINI-REUNION: Leezah (Lise) Cohen, Darcy Dunton, Nancy Gnaedinger, and Niki Cohen (Sicotte) dined together in June, and shared this photo with us.



END OF AN ERA: The Mayflower Restaurant and Pub, a neighbourhood fixture at Elgin and Cooper, served its last customers at the end of October. The pub was added to the restaurant in 1979.

and Cooper Streets is closing for good. It was a favourite little spot for the after-school crowd. *Robert Perch (1984) wrote online:* Sad news. All those hours spent there during spares from Lisgar in the 1980s, and during "spares" (aka skipping), and after school, eating orders and orders of fries, cups of coffee, toast... and talking about all the big issues of life like Elvis Costello's latest album, who you were sending a rose to on Valentine's Day, the latest party by the Pavilion in Rockcliffe, crushes, and on and on. Hours and hours of time in those booths, happy times. Another sad Ottawa passage.

Michael Dillon (1957) e-mailed: This is a brief note to respond to your request in the most recent edition for the names of Lisgar graduates who also taught at Lisgar. I graduated from Lisgar in 1957 and returned to teach Geography and Science for two years, 1966-68, before continuing my own education, obtaining a masters degree in Geography from Carleton and a doctorate in Natural Resource Management from Cornell. My Geography teacher at Lisgar, Donald Waddell, had a great deal to do with my selection of that subject. At Lisgar I

taught with some of those graduates-teachers you already mentioned, including Eric Manning, Bill Hamilton, Bill Fraser, and Bill Roberts, among others. In his very interesting article, Boudy van Oort (1957) began by referring to a number of friends he met at Lisgar with whom he remains in contact. I am one of them. We met on our first day at Lisgar in 1952, graduated together in 1957, and remain friends to this day. It was an e-mail from Boudy that led me to the Lisgar Alumni website, the recent editions of *Alere Flamam*, and this e-mail.

Bob Sun (2010) e-mailed: I am a class of 2010 graduate currently studying in New York and recently saw the call for interviewers for the 175th. I would love to get involved more with the Alumni Association and would be excited to help conduct interviews of alumni.

Rachel Steinberg (2009) e-mailed: I'm a 2005-09 Lisgar alumna and former Student Council co-president (I believe the first year in Lisgar's history two ladies ran the school!). I'd be happy to interview a person or two for the 175th book.

Lilia Lockwood (2011) e-mailed: I would be very interested in helping conduct the interviews. Could you please let me know how I can participate? ■

Life Members

We are delighted to report that seven alumni have become Life Members since the last issue of *Alere Flamamm*:
 Sondra Brewin (Thomson, 1956)
 Christopher Cooper (2009)
 Elizabeth Lance (2001)
 Ilana Lockwood (2007)
 Lilia Lockwood (2011)
 Anne Macklem (Hardy, 1946)
 Robert Shotton (1987)

Your Alumni Association is in need of new volunteers to join its executive, especially a **treasurer** to manage its finances. If you live in the Ottawa area and would like to learn more about this opportunity, please get in touch with us today by phone or by e-mail!

In Memoriam

ANDERSON, A. Patrick (1940), passed away on March 25, 2013. Patrick graduated from Queen's University in Chemical Engineering after serving overseas as a navigator with the 410 Cougar Squadron during WWII. He worked for Shell Canada for twenty-three years, eventually settling in Winnipeg, working at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

CARR, Joan (Harris, 1945), passed away on April 6, 2013. Survived by her sister Avenel (1938).

CAWSEY, Grant (1958), passed away on June 11, 2013.

GIBBON, Constance (Keyes, 1946), passed away on July 22, 2013. She worked for CIBC for over 40 years.

GILLESPIE, Anne (teacher 1992-95), passed away on May 10, 2013.

GORDON, Joan (Ashton, 1949), passed away on April 8, 2013. She was one of the earliest employees of what was then the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

HOLLAND, Nancy (Wyatt, 1943), passed away on October 16, 2013. After graduation, she studied Music at the University of Toronto.

HOWE, John (1943).

KATZ, Dr. Mortimer (1943), passed away on October 21, 2013. A practicing physician until weeks before his death at age 87, he was also a well-known jazz musician in Ottawa. "Mort" was described as "one of the last men standing" at the 2010 Ottawa JazzWorks Gala.

LADAS, Sophie (1949).

MCLEAN, Marjorie (Humphreys, 1951), passed away on March 15, 2013. Marjorie attended the Ottawa Civic Hospital School of Nursing.

MEAKIN, Asalyn (Hodgins, 1955), passed away on November 4, 2013. She had a long and successful career in real estate, and met every summer with six of her Lisgar girlfriends.

MENDEL, Elizabeth (Ellis, 1946), passed away on February 22, 2013. Mother of David, Anne (1972), and Barbara (1980).

PARKER, LCol (Ret) John (1936), passed away on May 29, 2012. John attended Royal Military College,

Kingston, and became an officer in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. He went overseas in 1940, and served in the UK and in the Northwestern Europe campaign. He was mentioned in dispatches in recognition of gallant and distinguished service, and was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for his conscientious and cheerful efforts. He returned to Canada in 1946 and retired from the service in 1969.

RICHENS, James (1950), passed away on December 31, 2012. He is survived by his wife, Joyce (1950).

RUI, Catherine "Lois" (Taylor, 1945), passed away on June 2, 2005, in Calgary. Lois worked as secretary to the New Zealand Trade Commissioner in Montreal, for Canadian Chemical and Cellulose, for an advertising firm, and for Avon. After living in California for ten years, she returned to Calgary to work as a real estate agent.

WALKER, John (1937).

WILLIS-O'CONNOR, Margaret Marise ("Jackie") (Bishop, 1944), passed away on June 24, 2013. Jackie was the daughter of Air Marshall William Avery (Billy) Bishop, V.C., C.B., D.S.O. and Bar, M.C., D.F.C. She was born in London, England, in 1926. Her godmother was Princess Marie Louise, cousin of Queen Mary, and her godfather was Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, a son of Queen Victoria. After the crash of 1929, the family moved back to Canada, where Jackie studied at Havergal, The Study, Elmwood, Lisgar, and McGill. In spite of receiving a scholarship in Mathematics to Queen's University, she enlisted in the R.C.A.F. on her 18th birthday. At Radio College, she trained in Morse code and was awarded her Wireless Sparks by her father. She founded the May Court Club of Montreal, and organized numerous galas, fundraising cocktail parties, and volunteer decorating committees for the Children's Mountain Cottage Convalescent Hospital, C.N.I.B. of Montreal, Montreal General Hospital, S.P.C.A. of Montreal, and the May Court Club of Ottawa. ■

From the Lisgar Archives: Notes from “Down Below”

From Joy Heft

At this time of year, when we remember those who served in the armed forces of our country, we draw your attention to the considerable interest and effort expended in bringing and keeping our memorial plaques up to date. Even now, so many years after the wars in question, we correct or add to the names on a somewhat regular basis.

This year, for example, we were in touch with the family of Alex Gray, when his eighty-year-old sister was granted an honorary diploma. This contact has resulted in the correcting of the spelling of his name to read “Alex” rather than “Alec.”

Shortly after this was accomplished, Douglas Meredith, also a veteran of the Korean War, paid a visit to the school and noted that his name was missing from this memorial, though it was present on that of the Second World War, in which he had also served. We are in the process of having a plate made to add to the Korean War plaque. Douglas has just turned 90 and indicated he is present at the National War Memorial each Remembrance Day. In addition, he makes school visits as part of the Dominion Institute Memorial Project to speak of his war-time service.

One final request came with a reminder from Ann Thackray, who at the time of the 160th anniversary reunion had noted that her grandfather’s name was spelled incorrectly “Thackeray” on the plaque. Although his two brothers’ plates had been replaced with the correct version, she wished her grandfather’s to remain as it was as part of the “historical memorial” but requested the matter be noted in our records. Every attempt is made to “get it right” and this request has been duly noted and respected.

Another plaque, the one dedicated to Alexis Helmer, has undergone a major refurbishment to replace the cloth poppies with a more substantial epoxy version and to have the brass

repolished and coated. As the Remembrance Day display in the alumni showcase this year highlighted both the First World War and the fact of Alexis Helmer’s death having inspired John McCrea’s poem “In Flanders Field,” this was a timely undertaking. The display also highlighted the names and some of the pictures of the young former Lisgarites

who gave their lives in this war. It is sobering to regard, as is the memorial plaque bearing their names at the entrance to the school. Other pictures of young Lisgar cadets being inspected, or otherwise preparing for service, attest to the long history of alumni who were prepared to serve our country.

Moving on to some current-day alumni, we have added to the collec-

tion of Lisgar authors housed in the school library a copy of *Bone and Bread* by Saleema Nawaz. One of Saleema’s contemporaries from the ‘90s describes it as “awesome.”

Finally, a surprising number of ‘90s grads were among the twenty-five or more alumni who visited the school during Doors Open Ottawa in June of this year. Thanks for coming! ■

SCHOOL SPIRIT OR COLLEGE SPIRIT.

In glancing over past editions of the *Vox* we notice many spirited attacks on the “School Spirit” of the O. C. I. Against these we desire to most emphatically protest. It may be that past Editors have been “stuck” for a subject for their editorials, and, in desperation, decided to write a fiery denunciation against our school spirit; or, it may be that they really were laboring under the misapprehension that there was no school spirit in the O. C. I. In either case it is hard to justify their condemnation, and we can conscientiously endorse the opinion of one of the visiting debaters to the Collegiate a few years ago, who said that, if the O. C. I. did not possess a school spirit, it possessed something infinitely better—a college spirit. We may not have the paltry school spirit of a small continuation school in a country district, but we can lay claim to the patriotism of a University; not a school spirit which finds its manifestation in the empty shouting of a few age-worn yells, but a deeper patriotism, which makes our school to its ex-pupils, something akin to what the University is to its graduates, something of permanent interest, an object of love, in which is enshrined many of our dearest memories, something which we realize, through shaping our early life lays the foundation for our future success. Indeed, it has often been remarked what an exceptional interest O. C. I. pupils take in their school after their graduation.

But it is unnecessary to turn to our graduates for confirmation of our contention. The marked success of all our school organizations is abundant proof. We possess not one, but two literary societies: the Junior and Senior Lyceums (possibly, this being a High School paper, we should say Lycea). In marked contrast is the condition of other schools. We challenge Brockville to a debate, and find that their society has gone smash. The same fate has overtaken Cornwall and Kingston, and doubtless, if time were taken to investigate, other failures might be found; whereas the Lyceum at present is as live and active an organization as in former years. We possess a school paper with a circulation of 800. Our Collegiate Club for boys is ever growing in popularity. Our Cadet Corps is a large and strong one, and the rifle team the most successful in Canada. The O. C. I. is represented in all branches of sport. Our field day is a great success. Inter-form basketball and hockey leagues are organized and carried through successfully. Our Glee Club has not yet won the Earl Grey trophy, but is steadily improving. The Orchestra is a band such as few schools can boast. Yet, in the face of such evidence, the cynic shrugs his shoulders, and proclaims abroad the non-existence of school spirit: but such facts speak for themselves. We hope no longer to hear, and see denunciations of our spirit; and let any would-be “knocker” within the school, remember that, in disparaging a concern of which he is a part, he disparages himself.

SCHOOL SPIRIT OF A CENTURY AGO: The Fall 1913 *Vox Lycei*, published a hundred years ago this month, included this strongly-worded commentary.

Interview with Nancy Gnaedinger, Consultant in Gerontology

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Montreal, moved to Wakefield, then to Rockcliffe Park. I love the Gatineau—it is in my soul.

What do you remember about Lisgar?

I attended Lisgar 1961-65. I remember Lisgar's magnificent architecture, and its location on the Rideau Canal. I was in the poster club, the annual concert, attended dances and parties, and loved to dance. I liked English (Miss Bishop), Art (Miss Jelinek), and French (the divine René Charron). I was on the downhill ski team. I have lifelong friends from elementary school: Leezah (then Lise) Cohen, Darcy Dunton, Lisa Drury, and Niki Sicotte. New friends at Lisgar included Nancy Griffiths and Natasha Dudarev. I stay in touch with my old friends.

Do you attend Lisgar reunions?

I attended one in the 1980s. René Charron remembered me, my brother Victor, and my sister Christine. What a great guy. The second was in 2004. I attended with my two siblings. We had a ball! The '60s grads closed down the party on the dance floor, dancing in a circle, cheering each other on. Most of the older and younger grads had already filtered out.

Where did you study after Lisgar?

I studied fine arts, fashion design, then became a fashion illustrator at Ogilvy's in Montreal for two years, saved my money, and went on a backpack tour of Europe. I returned to Canada, and it was the October Crisis in Montreal, so I left for Vancouver. There I worked in creative arts and activation with the elderly and others with physical, cognitive, or psychological impairments. I was greatly stimulated by this experience, and decided to return to university. I completed my BA and MA at Carleton, which led to contract work, and eventually to becoming a consultant in gerontology.

Tell us about work in gerontology

I do applied social research focussed on the elderly, disabled, and/or homeless—their characteristics, needs, preferences, and satisfaction with their housing and/or services. The



EXPERT ON AGING: Nancy Gnaedinger (1965) studied at Carleton before working in gerontology.

process includes designing research tools, doing data collection, analyzing findings, reporting them in plain language, and making recommendations to clients. My work helps clients make decisions about current and future programs/projects. The clients include governments at all levels and non-profit agencies such as the Alzheimer Society. I have published dozens of articles and reports and some chapters in books, and have given over fifty conference presentations. Some of my publications are in libraries and online.

What lessons have you learned from working in gerontology?

I've learned four main things:

(1) I am wary of the over-medicalization of aging—the idea that aging needs to be “fixed.” Aging is a natural part of the human life cycle.

(2) We have very high housing standards and expectations in Canada. We

could benefit from a few Old World lessons, such as “making do.”

(3) Artists age well because it's something within them that gives them joy

and doesn't disappear like a job, house, or spouse.

(4) Taking care of friendships and/or developing new friends is just as important as taking care of your physical, mental, and financial well-being, because when your familiars die, you will need to create new “social stock” to help sustain you.

What advice would you give to current Lisgar students about choosing a career in gerontology?

Gerontology is a growing field, especially dementia care. It needs well-educated, engaged, caring people. Establish your discipline first, whether it's nursing, sociology, psychology, planning, social geography, social work, architecture, or another field; then take a specialized program in gerontology.

What are your other interests?

Travelling, meeting interesting people, connecting with old friends, collecting works of art, doing fine crafts, going to theatre and dance performances, pushing myself intellectually with my book club, and soaking in the beauty around me, every day.

[Editor's note: we continue to work toward the ambitious goal of 175 interviews in time for Lisgar's 175th anniversary. We need your help. If you'd like to interview or be interviewed, please get in touch.] ■

Three Decades: Marie Dixon (continued)

to task those who habitually left their window open, or scolded with humour that one for walking on her wet floor. There were also those she inspired to give her the coins they found on the hallway floors to be donated to charity—Operation Go Home being one she was fond of.

It is not surprising that some of the after-school stragglers took to calling Marie by the name “Mom.” She tells the story of one young student whom she admonished not to ride his bike home late after school once the roads became icy, only to be told “Mom, you worry too much.” After noticing him absent for some time, she discovered

he had been injured in a bicycle accident. She later met his grateful parents, who presented her with flowers for her kind interest in their son. The young man also visited her after having graduated, and treated her to a meal at a Dow's Lake restaurant.

Marie gets a wistful look in her eye as she confesses to feeling blessed to have had all these special people in her life. In fact, one only had to step into the hallway with Marie after interviewing her for this article for the perfect affirmation of this—students greeting her warmly as we passed by, and one of them even stopping her for a great big hug! ■

From Centretown to POW Camp to Veterans Home

Gib McElroy (1942) is the first to admit that he's a "talker." So it was fitting that it was McElroy who spoke up that day in 1944 when, as a young prisoner of war in a German camp, he watched a new group of Allied prisoners arrive.

"Anybody from Ottawa?" he shouted to the throng. As he watched through the fence, he saw one prisoner raise his hand and say "Yes, I am." Then he looked more closely.

It was Charlie Kelly (1938), a face McElroy knew well from his childhood in Centretown. McElroy was overjoyed to see Kelly, whom he considered almost a brother, and who had been a German prisoner for years.

But neither McElroy nor Kelly could know how that chance meeting in the bleak surroundings of a German prison camp during the Second World War would shape their lives for the next 70 years or so. That connection came full circle recently at the Perley and Rideau Veterans Health Centre in Ottawa's east end where, greyer and less mobile now, the two old friends and former prison camp cellmates, met up once again when McElroy, now 89, arrived for a few weeks and then a more permanent stay. This time, it was Kelly, now 92, who arrived first, by just a few weeks.

They now live, as they did during those long months in captivity, in close proximity and are a well-known duo around the veterans home—McElroy with his walker, Kelly in his wheelchair. "Double trouble," a staff member fondly says.

"Everybody knows us," said McElroy. "I'm surprised that it is so well known that Charlie and I were together during the war."

Even before McElroy enlisted in the air force in 1942, walking out of Lisgar the day he turned 18 to do so, he had an eye on Charlie Kelly.

He knew who Kelly was. Their families were friendly, they went to the same church, lived in the same neighbourhood, and had both been students at Lisgar. When Kelly enlisted in the air



NEVER FAR APART: Charlie Kelly (1938) and Gilbert "Gib" McElroy (1942) have known each other for 70 years, and are now neighbours. *Julie Oliver / Ottawa Citizen. Reprinted by permission.*

force to join the Allied effort in the Second World War, McElroy followed his progress through the newspaper. He knew Kelly had been shot down and that he had been taken prisoner by the Germans. But that was all he knew until Kelly marched into Stalag Luft 7.

That meeting on German soil changed plenty for both young men from Ottawa. "I'll tell you, to have somebody like Charlie with me was just like I had my big brother with me," said McElroy, who fondly refers to his friend, who was an observer with the Royal Air Force in charge of watching for the enemy during flights, as "the navigator."

Kelly, who was just 17 when he enlisted, had been aboard a bomber taking part in a raid on Berlin on November 8, 1941, when their aircraft was hit. He and the rest of the crew bailed by parachute over the Netherlands. Kelly, who landed hard and injured his knee, was soon picked up by German soldiers.

Kelly had been a POW for years by the time McElroy entered the war. McElroy was a gunner with a crew making its 21st bombing raid when, he says, "we got the chop."

He was on the loose for about a week before being captured and taken to the camp where he would soon bump into Kelly, one of the longtime POWs being brought to the new camp.

Together, the young men from Centretown endured cold, hard work, an exhausting forced march that lasted months, and severe hunger. Kelly, who had weighed more than 190 pounds when he enlisted, was down to 123 pounds by the end of the war.

The prisoners were woken up at 3 a.m. one cold January morning and told to get out. "They got us on the parade square with just what we had on... not much more than we are wearing now... we didn't know where we were going," said McElroy.

The prisoners marched for months, during which McElroy says, "I depended on my friend the navigator." They spent three days in a boxcar—65 men to a car. When the train stopped, they were told to get out and march some more.

They eventually ended up at another camp where, as the end of the war approached, things were becoming chaotic.

Germans had begun surrendering

to the Allies. One night, they noticed fewer guards at the camp and the next day there were none. The Americans brought trucks to take the prisoners out, but armed Russian military vehicles blocked the entrance to the camp so they couldn't get out.

In the midst of the chaos, Kelly and McElroy decided it was time to make their escape. "We got off the trucks, got to the other end of the camp and climbed the fence."

They walked for days, gathering others with them as they went. One night they found a house to stay in and discovered carrots and potatoes in the basement, which they cooked for dinner. "It tasted like a Christmas dinner," said McElroy.

In the middle of telling their story, McElroy, the talker, is sometimes lost for words, and puts his head down and closes his eyes.

"You forget some of this stuff," he says. "I haven't thought of this for a long time, but some of this is coming back."

Kelly says he was able to make it through his years as a POW by doing what he had to do. He also learned some German to communicate with the guards. And he says his friend McElroy "could talk and talk, so I didn't have to."

Their memories are less sharp than they once were, but their bond is as solid as ever and has strengthened over the years. Kelly was best man at McElroy's wedding. McElroy is godfather to one of Kelly's sons. They met constantly over the years as part of a POW organization run by McElroy.

And now they are renewing a friendship that was sealed more than 70 years ago behind the gates of a prisoner of war camp.

"Charlie and I got together and we have been together ever since."

[Editor's note: This article, by Elizabeth Payne, was reprinted with the express permission of Ottawa Citizen, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.] ■