



C·I·H·S BULLETIN

Issue 53

ISSN 1485 - 8460

June 2008

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2007 AGM REPORTS

President's Report

The 21st Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society took place on the snowy evening of November 22 at the Italia Soccer Club in Ottawa.

It was a sad year for the Society and Canada's Immigration family. We lost **Liz Boyce** the den mother of the foreign branch, gifted trainer and innovator. We lost **Lloyd Dowsell**, a quiet, steady, hardworking colleague and long term member of the Society. The national immigrant and refugee settlement community felt the grievous loss of **Elizabeth Gryte**: able, influential, brilliant and innovative. During the summer we mourned the passing of **Cal Best** a man of immense courage, strength and determination who had a huge impact not only on our department but on the public service as a whole and on the country. And more recently, we lost **Al Troy**, a stalwart of the Society and a prolific and, I am happy to say, irreverent contributor to the Bulletin, a genuine original. All of them - fine public servants who contributed to the program our Society celebrates.

In the spring we put out a very substantial Bulletin 51. An index of Bulletins 1 to 51 created under the leadership of Charlene Elgee, Library Manager at Citizenship and Immigration Canada Headquarters in Ottawa, is included with Bulletin 52. We are grateful for this useful contribution to our work.

For the Indochinese refugee series we are looking for articles on the reception centres Greisbach and Longue Pointe, the design of

matching system, the Matching Centre, the refugee sponsorship master agreements, the Refugee Liaison Officers, and also for articles on operations abroad and the "Hai Hong" operation. For the 40th Anniversary of the Czech Refugee movement, August 2008, we have articles by Ed Zeigler and Milos Suchma of the Canadian Czech Association. We are also planning an article on the origins of the Refugee Student program as well as an article on the original point system.

Gerry van Kessel responded to a request by retired immigration employees Ross Nichols and Guy Currier to provide advice and materials for an exhibition on Dutch agricultural immigration to Eastern Ontario for the International Ploughing Match at Crosby in September.

Our project to get the Bulletin onto the internet has run into a bit of a snag. We have the index ready and we have the first 40 or so Bulletins in a simple scanned format and the later ones in a format that makes them searchable on line. The preference of course is to have the whole collection searchable on line. While scanning is cheap, getting a readable product through an optical character recognition process involves a certain amount of human editing at the rate of \$10-\$12 a page. With 400 pages to process the costs are substantial. More research and more discussions will be necessary in 2008.

Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration, Richard Fadden rounded out the AGM with a frank and collegial update on the Department.

---Mike Molloy

Secretary's Report

Currently we have 125 active members, of which 85 are life members leaving 40 to renew on an annual basis. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration has supported us with a corporate membership for which we are most grateful.

While many of our members are still in the workforce, we have many seniors who have been retired a number of years. This has been evident from the number of obituaries in our bulletins as older members pass on. New members have helped to balance losses but an active recruiting drive is needed.

Our website has given us a number of requests for information: requirements for migration to Canada or records of landing. These people are advised to send questions to the Department in Canada or to our representatives overseas. So far this has not been a heavy workload. Happily we have also received applications for membership through our website.

The printing and distribution of Bulletins is an ongoing activity and we have tried to maintain the rate of publication at three issues a year.

---Al Gunn

Treasurer's Report

CIHS Financial Report Nov1, 2006 to Oct 30, 2007

Cash on hand Nov 1, 2006	\$3096.45
Revenue	\$1741.27
Expenses paid	(\$894.83)
Cash on hand Oct 31, 2007-11-23	\$3942.89
Commitments:	
Printing and publishing	(\$2300)
AGM expenses	(\$600)
Actual Cash position	\$1042.89
Investments	\$6565.83
Total assets as of Oct 31, 2007-11-23	\$7608.72

We are approaching the point where our revenues and expenses are heading toward a precarious balance. Preparation and mailing of Bulletin #50, a milestone edition, cost us in excess of \$500. If the plan to publish three times is fulfilled we will likely be spending more than \$1000 each year.

Considering that revenues, apart from the annual \$1000 contributed by CIC, are rather anaemic, the Board and the membership will have to either economise or generate more revenues. The temporary lift we get from those generous people who take out life memberships does not repeat year to year because life memberships are

a one time contribution. Scarcely more than a dozen of our annual members keep up the yearly contribution of \$10. Needless to say that does not take us very far.

We will close 2008 with a positive cash balance but we are looking at dipping into the reserve in 2009 just to keep doing things the way we have been. If there is a need to increase our activities to ensure preservation of some of the highlights of our history as a public institution or to make our documentation more accessible, the use of the reserve will come more quickly.

--- Raphael Girard

Obituary – Elizabeth Gryte 1947 - 2007: a personal memoir

---Mike Molloy

Elizabeth Gryte of CIC Toronto's Regional Office was an inspiring public servant, a gifted artist and a warm and thoughtful friend who passed away on 29 June 2007 after a short illness.

Elizabeth spent most of her career at Ontario Region's Settlement Branch and was the recipient of the Deputy Minister's Achievement Award and the Award of Excellence which recognizes exceptional performance and represents one of the highest official distinctions a public servant can receive. While Elizabeth was honoured by this recognition, her real reward came from making a difference in the lives of newcomers to Canada.

Elizabeth and I became friends years before we even met. Between 1986 and 89, while I was serving at our Visa Section in Nairobi, the UNHCR and the Red Cross kept finding groups of refugees in secret concentration camps in Somalia and Djibouti. One such group was a dozen men who had been taken hostage as teenagers and held for 13 years. They were resilient men but they had been through so much there were justifiable concerns about just dropping them unannounced into Canada. Consequently a description of their circumstances was sent to Ontario Region's Settlement group. Within 48 hours someone named Gryte fired back a complete settlement package that brought together sponsors, provincial and local services, medical and psychological support and counsellors who spoke these men's language.

A few months later 130 men and 8 women, considered spies by local authorities, were found in a terrible place called Shalanbot Camp. The women were in particularly bad shape. The response from this same Gryte at Ontario Settlement was as immediate and thorough as before. It is worth noting that the line between the response to the Shalanbot women and Canada's "Refugee Women at Risk" program is a very direct one.

This capacity to provide for extreme refugee cases demonstrated that Elizabeth and her colleagues at Ontario Region Settlement had a web of relationships of trust, confidence and partnership and shared purpose that reflects our country at its very best. One could fill a book with the ideas that came out of Ontario's settlement experience because Elizabeth first challenged and then championed them. Elizabeth's dedication and innovative thinking were recognized well beyond the boundaries of Ontario Region. Not only did

she play a significant role in the reorganization of settlement programs and service delivery throughout the country but other countries also called on her for her expertise. From her involvement in the movement of the Boat People in the late 1970s to Operation Parasol and the recent reception of Karen refugees, Elizabeth showed compassion for individuals and a passion to fight for their needs. She was not shy about identifying problems and was always ready with a proposed solution. It is tempting to wonder how much of her chosen career was rooted in her experience as an immigrant child, child of Polish refugees.



In the early 90s I came to know that Elizabeth lived in a work of art, produced a stunning variety of works of art and drove convertibles and Beetles, and drove them rather fast in fact ... the taxi drivers of her birthplace, Beirut, would have been very proud of her.

She was a very interesting person. On one hand the highly focussed, disciplined, dedicated and courageous professional, demanding the highest standards of excellence, professionalism and integrity from herself, her peers, her partners in government and the voluntary sector, from her subordinates and from those in the department foolish enough to think of themselves as her superiors. On the other hand: a stylish, flamboyant artist with a terrific eye for the beautiful, the unusual and the original, coupled with the ability to produce a body of truly original works of art in a variety of mediums which conveyed a celebration of beauty and life in all its complexity, often with that sense of humour she tried to hide bursting through. The title of her one woman show "SLOPS -The Secret Lives of Public Servants" tells it all.

---Review by **Diane Burrows**

Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-

2006, Revised Edition

By Valerie Knowles, Dundurn Press, 2007, 310 pages. \$26.99

This book presents a clear and concise overview of immigration history and the development of Canadian immigration policy. Useful for both the student and the practitioner of immigration, it lays out the many interesting, enlightened and calculated immigration initiatives that brought Canada from its early days to the end of 2006. At the end, the author, Valerie Knowles, provides her own ideas on some of the upcoming themes and challenges for the 21st century. The book also reveals contextual information for amateur genealogists looking to learn more about their families' relocations to Canada.

Knowles has chronologically presented how successive decision-makers in Canada addressed significant and enduring questions about immigration. Amongst the challenges that recur most persistently are: does Canada need immigrants; if so, what is the "right" number of immigrants; how do we handle immigration questions with the United States; does a person's country of origin define one's ability to contribute to Canada; what is the Canadian immigration response to resolve grave geopolitical and humanitarian issues in other parts of the world; and how should we "select" the best immigrants for Canada?

Strangers at Our Gates' strengths are an even-handed presentation of political decisions, their consequences and the controversies surrounding them. Repeatedly, I noted effective linkages drawn between societal events and their consequences for immigration. Overall, the story told is positive – Canada grew as a nation (politically, economically and socially) in many ways through the efforts of immigrants and with the support of a succession of immigration policies. The book also has a rich bibliography and useful statistical tables.

The tough and enduring issues of racism are tackled by addressing situations in Canada's past where people were turned away solely because of the colour of their skin or the religion they practiced. Situations are outlined where, again and again, immigration decisions were taken solely for political advantage. In covering the more recent past, she also alluded to the degree to which fraud and misrepresentation affects decision-making. In all these situations, she covered these difficult topics openly and without cynicism.

This book could have been enriched, without adding appreciably to its length, by adding material about two particular themes. The first is the evolving role of provinces in Canada's immigration story. Knowles conscientiously addresses Québec's changing interest in immigration and its assertion of its constitutional powers. More details on how the other provinces engaged in the immigration debate over time would be useful.

The second recommendation would be to bring attention to the growth of immigration advocacy and engagement in Canada. The book focusses on Government of Canada immigration efforts, and in telling these stories, Knowles includes key information on how interest groups and individuals were engaged. By linking these efforts by advocates, Knowles could show how their contributions helped to define our immigration issues, policies and practices through dialogue, campaigns and litigation. It would also acknowledge their evolving and truly valuable efforts in assisting our newcomers' establishment in Canada's communities.

I read this book from three viewpoints. As a general reader of Canadian history I needed a "tune-up" on immigration history. This book helps to fill in the gaps – even for events as recent as the development of Bill C-86 and the development of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. As a descendant of immigrants hoping to fill some gaps in my family history I did glean some information that may bear fruit with a bit more research. Finally, as an immigration practitioner, I could not help but focus on passages about the evolution of a federal immigration bureaucracy. The book looks at the evolution of our bureaucratic "gates" and how the succession of Ministers and senior bureaucrats tried to make these gates work effectively within expanding constitutional requirements. It presents an exhaustive case study

on how immigration processes became very complex through the 1970s and 1980s, as Canada's legal checks and balances grew.

The final chapter in this book summarizes current challenges in the highly-polarized immigration debate in Canada. Knowles particularly focussed upon the challenges of developing the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, which abandoned the points system for the selection of immigrants to meet economic needs, and replaced it with the "human capital model". She explores avenues where policy dialogue would be fruitful, as "historically, Canada has never had a clearly articulated national consensus about what role immigration should play in its future". In so doing, she gently presents the ongoing and public debates about Canada's population size and makeup, the role of multiculturalism and the ever-present issue of racism.

Because "...the decisions that we make now about what sort of people are admitted to Canada will determine the kind of country we will have a hundred years from today", I recommend this book to you.

Bulletin 45 contained 'Canada's Refugee Program 1945 - 1970' which mentioned Istrian farm workers. In the following Jack Mitchinson describes this little known refugee movement.

THE ISTRIAN REFUGEE MOVEMENT

--- Jack Mitchinson

In January 1959 Mr. Bev Easton, a representative of the Canada and Dominion Sugar Company, Chatham Ontario, went to Europe to look for field crop workers. Emigration authorities in Northern Italy worked very closely with him to select families most suitable for cash crop work. Among those he interviewed were Istrian families with agricultural experience.

The Istrians had become refugees in their own country in 1947 when the province of Istria was turned over to Communist Yugoslavia as war reparations. Yugoslavia considered them to be Italian, Italy considered them to be Yugoslavs and for all intents and purposes the Istrians felt they were nobodies, abandoned with no homes and no country.

Following interview and selection the families were processed by the Canadian visa office in Rome. They received Assisted Italian passports and assisted passage. Unlike most refugee movements they were required to repay their transportation loans after arrival. They traveled to Canada on the SS *Saturnia* and were met in Halifax by staff of Canada and Dominion Sugar and Naldi Coletto of the Immigration Department.

Naldi was a bilingual (English/Italian) member of the Fort Erie staff and accompanied the group to Chatham where they were met at the Canadian Pacific Railway Station by company field officers, interpreters and myself. Naldi's trip was made particularly exhausting because all along the rail line farmers came aboard the train to lure the Istrians with the promise of jobs on their farms. Naldi and I were the only Canadian based immigration officers to have contact with this movement.

Over the years I worked closely with many new arrivals, including refugees (most notably the Hungarians). The Istrians were the most presentable, best mannered and happiest group I have ever encountered. The Istrians were happy to be in Canada and to this day appreciate the opportunities they were given. One father told his children: "The border is at the door. Outside it is Canada so speak English there. Inside we're Italians and we speak Italian". Thus, they retained their culture and language.

With the co-operation of the company's agricultural staff, the farmers for whom they were to work and myself, and with the help of interpreters, the families were transported to their first residences in Canada. The sugar company and/or the farm employer provided bedding, furniture and other items. The accommodation was certainly an improvement over the refugee

camps but by our standards left much to be desired. The farm work was stoop labour, included thinning and blocking sugar beets, hoeing tobacco, soybeans and tomatoes and harvesting.

In earlier years, as local help became scarce, farm help came from Indian reservations and the Atlantic Provinces. These workers generally returned home following the harvest. In 1956-57 the immigration department provided single Portuguese field workers and when the harvest was over dispersed them throughout Ontario. Most went to larger cities and took jobs in construction. The Istrian families, however, remained in the Chatham-Kent area as their children were in school and many found alternate employment during the off season.

During the following years I came to know each of these families personally. I visited many of them on a regular basis and provided what assistance I could. Unfortunately, the Chatham immigration office was closed (re-organization again) in 1967 and as a result I started my 33 years of wandering.

On my retirement in 1990 my wife Helen and I returned to Chatham. I not only renewed my contacts with the Istrians but I was introduced to their now grownup children and grandchildren. Several were school teachers, five were doctors, a number were engineers (one on the municipal staff) and others were in various professions and businesses including a well

The local Chapter of the "Lega Istriani" recently opened a one week display in downtown Chatham telling the story of the movement of Istrians. This was a professional display designed in Italy, shipped to Chatham and formally opened by the mayor, other dignitaries and myself.

known local steak house. These families are a great example of the value of the immigration program.

This movement was not the only Istrian one. Prior to and after 1959 some families and individuals arrived in Canada. A second large group came in 1960 but as jobs were no longer available in Chatham they went to other communities. There are approximately 170 families of Istrian origin in the municipality of Chatham-Kent.

In order to keep their family ties and history alive the "Lega Istriana" of Chatham was formed in 1989. Each year a picnic is held in the community with up to 400 Istrians attending. They come from as far away as British Columbia, the Maritimes and even Australia. Branches have been formed in Ottawa, Hamilton, Vancouver and Toronto. Every five years there is a great gala. It has been held in such places as Niagara Falls, New York, Montreal and Chatham. On every occasion since my return to Chatham in 1990 my wife and I have been invited as honoured guests.

While the department has shown no interest in writing up the history of this movement, I have been interviewed twice recently by Italian authors who have published the history of the Istrians in Canada, Australia and other countries. I recently received Viviana Facchinetti's book entitled "C'ERAUNA s VOLTA" published in Italy in 2006.

---review by **Gerry van Kessel**

The Newly Found Land.

Eyewitness Accounts of the Canadian Immigration Experience. Eds. Norman Hillmer and J. L. Granatstein, Thomas Allen Publishers, Toronto 2006, 431 pp.

Canada as a country of immigration continues to be a rich field for historians. Norman Hillmer and Jack Granatstein have edited a recent contribution. The title is

particularly apt and is taken from the writing of Neil Bissoondath, himself an immigrant to Canada and contributor to the book. The book contains 144 first person stories of the diverse experiences and views of immigrants from all parts of the world to all areas of Canada over the entire period of Canada's history from Champlain to Michaëlle Jean. Their stories reflect very different experiences and views of why they left their homelands and selected Canada, their journey to Canada,

the struggles and loneliness of their initial years in Canada, their struggles with identity and loyalties and their views of their new land and its people. Some of the stories are painful to read and a reminder of the hardships that were, and are, the lot of many immigrants. Yet most would likely concur with a Portuguese immigrant: "We realized that we had to go through all this to get out of the vicious cycle of life in our home country".

The book should resonate with former and present immigration officials. It explains, if not justifies, why migrants so often act in ways contrary to the laws and procedures officers must apply. Personally the book brings back memories of my three weeks in quarantine at Pier 21 and then of going to school and adapting to my new country with the special help of Mrs. Scott, my grade school teacher. As well, the authors of several excerpts, including Arthur Kroeger, are known to me and to many members of the Society.

The book tells us about Canada and why people came here and continue to come. Perhaps the reason that is most encompassing is Andrew Coyne's quote of Michaëlle Jean's inaugural address as Governor General. She spoke about "this land of freedom", a freedom often taken for granted by Canadians but relished and understood by immigrants whose countries had little or no freedom. Freedom is not just political; it is also social and economic. Several stories talk about the "ultra-republican spirit" found in Canada and the "advantages of equality", features that were most attractive to immigrants who grew up in countries where status and class determined economic and social success. Freedom, however, is not found only in Canada. The choice of Canada over other free countries like Australia and the US is sometimes for other reasons. For Ivan and Marta Strasnický, refugees from Czechoslovakia in 1968, the choice was Canada because the office in Paris was

friendlier than the offices of Australia and the US.

However an overall sense emerges that Canada was and is insufficiently hospitable or welcoming. Calling Canada an "unusually reluctant host", as is done in the Introduction, is unworthy. My question is: "unusually reluctant" compared to what and to whom? It is indicative of an undertone of an academically fashionable but unsupported broad brush critique of Canada's immigration policy. The inference is made that being opposed to the policy on refugee determination means being opposed to refugees and immigrants, a clear non-sequitur. The reduction in the number of refugee claimants in recent years is a world-wide phenomenon of fewer refugees, and not the result of new anti-refugee claimant policies by the Canadian government. It is possible to support immigrants and refugees without supporting the specific policies in place today.

A weakness in the book is insufficient context both with respect to historical conditions and to the process of immigration adaptation. The latter is lengthy and difficult involving principally the immigrant but, as well, the host society. Inevitably there are tensions as different groups of people get used to each other. Tensions do not necessarily mean implacable hostility. Adaptation takes time both for immigrant and host. The book very well illustrates the complexity of settlement and adaptation by immigrants. We need another book that looks at the same issues but from the perspective of the host. Canadians have been very much changed by immigration and a book that explored these changes would be most helpful.

These misgivings should not deter one from reading the book. Immigration plays such a large role in Canada that the experience of new Canadians is part of our common experience.

...Part III

Gary Komar's experiences in the Emirates

Between April and June 2005 the focus was on hiring VIP staff, arranging training courses, reviewing office floor plans, selecting office furniture and setting up the new work flow, fee and IT systems. The short-term objective was to have our selected VIP managers and

supervisors take management training as soon as possible. They could then be detached from their regular Immigration Head Office duties and participate with Saeed in working out the fine details of the new operation, practicing their newly learned management skills.

Saeed and I were constantly attempting to convince the bureaucracy that the VIP operation was no ordinary undertaking and that we needed authorizations and signatures, not discussions or debate. Many of the calls from the chairman, or other police members of our committee, were in a panic attempting to send us here and there, without thought or planning. Hurry, hurry; wait, wait! While Ray and I were being told to present our citizenship plans to the Sheik, Saeed was continually being called away on other immigration business. Repeated attempts to get the police committee members together to discuss our progress and obtain decisions and commitments failed because they were often unavailable or would not show. Matar said he was on at least 15 other committees; Major Salem was on 12.

We were unsuccessful in hiring the translator we needed to take the proposals from English to Arabic in order to be presented to Sheik Saif and the Special Committee. Much of the miscommunication, I am certain, resulted from a questionable grasp of the written English word. I had been warned before I left for the Emirates that officials there prefer a verbal rather than a written English presentation.

We met with teachers and representatives of training institutes to fine tune our needs, determine costs and to establish training schedules. I wanted all our successful candidates to be given psychometric assessment to determine their suitability for the new positions. Matar refused on the basis of costs saying that the 15 to 20 minutes we spent with applicants were sufficient to determine their psychological suitability.

In May 2005, well into staff recruitment, Matar advised me that the 30 people selected from Head Office were too many as he had only approved 15 - a figure I had never heard before. We had to take 20 police cadets of questionable educational and intellectual qualifications plus 50 totally inexperienced Tanmia candidates, so experienced Head Office staff was needed to form the nucleus of the VIP operations. Surely Tanmia candidates could backfill those taken from Head Office.

My concern now was how soon the Tanmia people would be hired and the training authorized. Unless they were government employees, no training funds could be authorized for them. Major Sultan in the Human Resources Department was to help with the induction process. Sultan noted that I had selected too many women from the Tanmia candidate's list. "Women get pregnant and can stay away for four months," he protested. When Sultan told Matar that 90% of the successful Tanmia candidates were women, Matar claimed he had told me earlier that 50% of the VIP office had to be men. Again, this was news to me. He ordered me to go back to Tanmia and the Police Recruitment Office and select more men.

By mid-June 2005, Saeed and I were still waiting for approval for our 50 candidates, to authorize their training and to begin the process of inducting them into the government which, in itself, was a long and tedious process. By the end of June, our elevated frustration levels prompted us to seek an audience with the Sheikh's Chief of Staff, Colonel Nasir. We reviewed our needs, concerns, delays and miscommunications. Nasir debated the VIP staff levels with us and agreed to our selection of 100 people and to our training plan. He immediately phoned the appropriate police sections authorizing our plans. General Khalil, head of the police finance department agreed to renovate the former Women's Sport's Centre for up to one million Dirhams from the 500,000 authorized previously. Furniture could be drawn from police stores or from police suppliers. Saeed and I were on the move again.

Another month passed. Progress was painfully slow. A company was finally chosen to renovate the selected office for fewer than one million Dirhams. On July 13 the Colonel in charge of Human Resources signed authorizations to hire or transfer 100 people to the VIP office. Over 100 Tanmia candidates were interviewed to replace the 30 employees we were taking from Head Office. Although personnel had not yet taken their management course, we set up a VIP Management Team to plan the workflow, fees and IT systems for the new office. The Central Intelligence Division would provide speedy security clearance to VIP clients

through color coded applications and put two of its staff on site. Saeed and I began to select furniture and equipment for the new office, assign candidates to various jobs based on their skills and experience, and organise a training schedule for selected VIP staff who were not on holidays.

We also met with the federal Finance Department to set up procedures to transfer fees collected at the immigration application stage as well as an accounting and auditing process. And we met with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank representatives to establish a system to take fees on site including credit card payments, transfer the fees to Federal and VIP accounts and to pay fees on-line. Saeed and I discussed with Federal Labour Office officials how to obtain labour clearances through an integrated IT system and discussed our equipment needs with an IT company to establish new programs and integrate current databases. Arrangements had to be made with Empost to pick up and deliver client applications. Meetings had yet to be scheduled with Foreign Affairs concerning an overseas operation and with a typing company to be on site to prepare applications for clients. We also intended to design a VIP Reward System to honour employees for the quality and quantity of their work; Dubai immigration was able to extract from the computer the daily production levels of each employee.

During the first week of August, the Sheik called Saeed at home for an update on the VIP project. He was pleased with developments and asked Saeed to call him directly if any problems were encountered. His Highness also indicated his intention to open similar VIP offices in Al Ain and in the northern Emirates. On August 23 the Gulf News announced a VIP immigration office was to be opened in Abu Dhabi. In the meantime, renovations had begun at the former Women's Sports Centre building and VIP staff was completing their English language and ICDL computer training.



After I returned to Canada in August 2005, I learned that the former Women's Sports Centre had been sold by the royal family member who owned the building. Saeed was given a small building at Head Office to renovate and to implement the VIP system we had designed. The Manager of Immigration Head Office and some supervisors were transferred elsewhere.

On February 1, 2006, the Gulf News headlines read: "Queues cut as immigration service undergoes revamp" The newspaper reported:

Effective January 21, the Abu Dhabi Naturalisation and Residency Department has revamped its entire operations to provide swift and efficient services, which include 14-hour daily working hours, same day processing of transactions, and an Empost delivery system.

More than 35 counters were opened and the number of staff increased. "The new changes include urgent processing of documents with an additional fee of Dh100." A photograph showed a counter configuration identical to one Saeed and I had designed. "Company representatives can use these services with the help of an electronic network system. Automated electronic machines have also been installed in these sections for electronic processing of payment of fees to avoid workload at counters." And, Gulf News stated, applicants could now check the status of their application through the Internet. This was, at least, a start.

Saeed continues to manage the VIP operation out of Immigration Head Office. He reports that managers, staff and the public are extremely pleased with the changes.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

My name is Jack Mitchinson and I served with Canada Immigration from 1952 until my retirement in 1990. I suffered through many re-organizations, in the 80's was loaned to External Affairs for two years, worked in many locations and in every possible job description until retiring from my last appointment as District Administrator, London, Ontario.

Browsing through my issues of the Bulletin I was reminded of many people and my intention, for some time, of sending this reminiscence off to you.

Bud Currie was one of my favourite people. We both spent many nights in hotel rooms and I recall talking to Bud on several evenings. He had many stories of great interest but the one I remember was that Bud would go for a walk each evening. He said that as he travelled at the expense of the public he would look for some needy individual near the hotel (homeless) and give him a few dollars. He tried to do this each evening. Also, he phoned his father, who I believe resided in B.C., every evening. Like all of us he had his faults but he was a good man.

I also keep in close touch with Al Aldridge, another interesting and close friend. I always enjoy seeing Joe Bissett being interviewed on TV telling it like it should be. I noted Raph Girard's name in the Bulletin and recall him on tour and being in Chatham with me many years ago.

The mention of the Hungarian Refugees brings back many not so fond memories. I had over 125 in Goderich where I was the only Immigration Officer. One murdered his son, three were killed by a train and I had to arrange the burials. One put a bullet hole through my office window, two borrowed \$5,000.00 from a local bank with the assistance of the local retired Air Vice-Marshal and disappeared the next morning. At the same time I was commuting for a full year, three days a week or more, Goderich to Stratford where there was another 150 refugees and the local officer had been suspended. Interesting times.

Some 30 years ago I arranged for all local retirees and their spouses to meet for dinner on the last Thursday of every month. At that time we had approximately 35 attend the dinners in a local restaurant. We still meet but the group has dwindled to five widows, one other officer and his wife, and my wife and myself.

Around 1975 I also arranged a gathering of retirees from across Canada, including employees with 25 years on staff. This gathering of about 200 people took place in London, Ontario with such notables as Jack Manion, Les Voisey, George Jeffs, Ian Stirling and many others.

