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NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting will be held at
Jean Vanier High School
1145 Bronte St. South, Milton

at 6:30pm on Thursday the 3rd day of December 2015

There are two ways to vote for Directors, Bylaw changes
and Auditor appointment: By Proxy Form, or in person
at the meeting. For more information please go to

www.haltonfoodforthought.com

COMMENT

Taking a 'boat ride' down memory lane

By Ted Brown
tedbit@hotmail.com



A Ted Bit

Last Saturday night The Sidekick and I decided to go out on a date.

Limehouse Memorial Hall, just up the road, was holding a coffee house as a fundraiser.

I love taking in those events at the hall. Limehouse has been my lifelong stomping grounds—and it's nice to drop by and 'sit a spell' and visit with old friends.

And being a longtime folkie, well, it just doesn't get any better than attending a coffee house.

The show was entitled 'Bob Gee and Friends' and Bob (another one of Limehouse's sons,) assembled a group of his colleagues with an eclectic collection of musical talents.

Many of the performers were from Glen Williams, (another hot spot of musical talent) and the sold-out crowd was treated to a number of varying styles of music— from bluegrass, country, folk, pop, some bluesy sounds and various genres of music thrown in for good measure.

The performers included Bob Gee, Jim Broughton, Christine Ford, Ian Maddix, Peter Perko, Ian Jarvie, Bill McBride and Chris Udell.

I tell ya, there was one pile of talent in that old Limehouse Memorial Hall, Saturday night.

The coffee house provided coffee (decaf for us old guys who can't sleep anymore after a couple of cuppas of high test,) and an ample supply of desserts and chocolate treats on each table.

It was a great night of entertainment and conversation. And as I sat there taking it all in, I was transported back in time, to a time and place a waaaay back down memory lane.

Coffee houses were pretty common in the mid-1960s, and probably one of the most famous was The Riverboat, located in the basement at 134 Yorkville Avenue, in Toronto.

Owned and operated by Toronto music guru Bernie Fiedler, The Riverboat Coffee House was the place to be, if you wanted to see any of the Toronto-based folk musicians of the time.

Fledgling Canadian folkies like Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young, Ian and Sylvia Tyson,

Murray McLauchlan and a host of others from the Toronto area were regulars at The Riverboat, cutting their teeth on the little stage with the not-so-great sound system, long before they became well known musical artists.

Not only did the local folkies show up for an intimate concert with the coffee-drinking crowd, out-of-towners like Joni Mitchell, Harry Belafonte, Arlo Guthrie and Kris Kristofferson dropped in from time to time to play a set, adding to the eclectic nature of the place and its music.

The decor was unique too, with red booths and the brass portholes, (it was a 'riverboat' after all,) and many flocked to the place paying the \$1.75 cover charge.

It opened in 1964, and enjoyed a 14-year run, as THE place to hear folk, folk rock and any other derivation of that music of that time.

I was there once, mostly to be able to say 'I'd been to The Riverboat' but unfortunately, I didn't see any big names performing. That night, it was local aspiring musicians hoping to share their music and songwriting or to simply play and entertain.

Nothing lasts forever, and The Riverboat was no exception. The Coffee House closed its doors June 25, 1978, as Murray McLauchlan performed the final concert, signalling the end of the folkie era.

Back at Limehouse, I listened to those old tunes being sung, songs that took me back to a simpler time, when we were much younger, had very few responsibilities, facing each day with young abandon.

Today, there's a historic plaque on Yorkville Avenue at Avenue Road, a reminder of The Riverboat Coffee House of long ago.

At Limehouse, we really don't need a plaque to remind us of those simpler days.

All we need is a handful of musicians, who can pick a chord on a guitar, and sing a song—magically bringing the past back to life, if only for an evening.

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