

Acton Celebrates Seniors' Month

The New Tanner is proud to feature seniors each week this month



June is Seniors Month in Ontario – a chance to honour and recognize those whose talents and volunteering make Acton a nicer place to live. This week the focus is on Acton's Phyllis Bunn.

This week I am writing about a lady who is very hard to pin down. It took six weeks to get an appointment with her.

Phyllis Bunn was born in Weston, Ontario on April 10, 1924. When she was five years old she and her parents Marie and Horace Hillman moved in with her grandmother who was ill, so her parents could help look after her.

She attended Memorial Public school in Weston and Weston High School. On completing high school she attended Shaw's Business College.

Two of her uncles joined the army and the third one was a gunner in the RCAF. In 1943, her Uncle Tom was shot down over Germany

In 1942, when she was 18, she joined the Canadian Air Force. She signed up in Toronto and went directly to Rockcliffe Air Force Base, (just outside Ottawa). She remembers the sergeant was

really tough on them. They were up at 6 a.m. in full uniform, buttons and shoes shined; everything was inspected right down to the corners on the bed and the way the clothes hung in the cupboards. She said even today she thinks of this when she makes her bed each morning. Then they got their work duties for the day. They ate in the Mess Hall, and after lunch would be off on route marches which would go for miles. She remembers the blisters.

After basic training she went to Lower Rockcliffe to take her six-week photography course. They had two very good instructors who trained them on speed-graphic, 35 mm, and F24 cameras and how to develop the films. Phyllis was transferred to Bombing and Gunners School, in Jarvis. At first they took class photos, panoramic photos, and photos of parades, parties and visiting dignitaries. When the

girl in charge was posted, Phyllis tried for her Corporal "hooks" and took her place. That's when she started flying in Bolingbroks, Hansens, and occasionally Harvards. The pilots were here to do Reconnaissance Training and were from the States and Australia.

They often went to Port Dover on a Saturday night dancing. One night the two students from Australia had to leave around 11 p.m. to go night training. About 2:25 a.m. Phyllis was awakened to go on the fire truck with her equipment to a plane crash. She discovered it was the two students they were dancing with earlier and of course the pilot. She found it very hard taking pictures of the crash site, the caskets and funeral.

She laughs when she tells me that on bombing exercises she would lie on her belly over the escape hatch in the plane to score the bombing hits on the targets. These exercises took place mostly over Lake Erie.

When she left Jarvis she was sent to Dartmouth. While there she flew out over the Atlantic sea and Newfoundland taking pictures of the ships in the Atlantic.

While there she heard that Howie Bunn, a boy she had gone to public school with had been injured when the ship he was on was torpedoed, so she felt sorry for him and visited him in the Halifax hospital. She said when they were in school they didn't like each other. He would push her over when skating. Needless to say, they fell in love and married.

Phyllis always wished she had a brother or sister. When she married Howie she had her wish. Seven brothers-in-law and two sisters-in-law. They were both working at Moffat when they found their first apartment. While there Phyllis found out she was pregnant and at 7 1/2 months



fell down the stairs and had Tom (who they named after Phyllis's uncle who was killed) Tom was about 1 1/2 when Howie received a telegram saying he was hired by the O.P.P. He was told to report to Brampton.

They rented their first house, a wartime house in Brampton.

When Tom was four years old, she went back to work as secretary/ book keeper at Canadian Tampax for three years. She then went to work at the Brampton Court House as secretary to the Clerk Treasurer. When they bought their first home, Bill Davis had just passed the bar, and was working with his father who was the Crown Attorney. Bill did the closing papers on their home.

While working at the Court House, an American Company, Houdaille Ind., came to Brampton. They were advertizing for an Executive Secretary, so she applied. She was called in for an interview and was hired the next day. She stayed with them for 27 years.

Her husband always wanted to live in the country. One

day he came home and said he had found a nice three acre lot called Second Line. They bought the land and built a ranch bungalow, moving into the house in December 1966. The road is now called Heart Lake Road. The following year Phyllis was involved in a very serious car accident and nearly died. A young man on a snowmobile crossed the road in front of her and she had to swerve to avoid the accident.

Their son Tom started flying at 16 and got his commercial license at 18. He was then hired by a mining company to go to the Northwest Territories, Alaska, Mexico and many other places as a bush pilot. He kept flying until his second son Brad was born and then became a fire fighter for the Brampton Fire Department. His wife Patricia was an RN, and worked for the Peel Memorial hospital for 20 years. They are now retired and living in Southampton.

Sadly, Phyllis's husband died in April 1986. Eight years ago she sold the house in Brampton and moved to Southampton to be close to

her son Tom and his wife Patricia.

Phyllis's oldest grandson Trevor is a sales manager for Pure Fishing and also a volunteer Fire Fighter. He is married to Rhonda and they have two children. Phyllis's second grand son, Brad, was a stunt man in movies and worked with several famous actors. He is now a police officer in Toronto.

In 2008, the Gals on the Go had a trip to the Hamilton Warplane Heritage Museum. Phyllis had the pleasure of meeting Wayne A. Ready, who is the coordinator of the Bolingbroke restoration project. He enjoyed talking to Phyllis and listening to her stories. Standing and touching the plane brought back many memories for Phyllis.

Phyllis moved to Acton five years ago and lives in the Birchway Apartments.

She loves to play cards, visit casinos, and play shuffle board. She ran a five pin bowling league for many years and loved lawn bowling. She is a member of the Acton Legion, and the Ladies Auxiliary, and often helps serve at the banquets.



Members please fill out a member's survey at the front desk and return to Michelle or Wendy. Your input is very important. Some members may have received one by Email.

The Centre has purchased a pair of lovely wooden coffee tables to replace the glass one the Chocolate bunny demolished. Have you noticed the bright red comment box? If you have a suggestion or comment, please fill out a sheet and drop it in the box

I understand the trip to Orillia was wonderful. The dinner on the boat was delicious, the show funny, and the weather beautiful. What more can you want.

When I walked into the Centre last Tuesday the room was in darkness and everyone was enjoying



the movie, coffee and popcorn on the large screen. The movie on Tuesday, June 28 at 1 p.m. will be Calendar Girl. I know everyone will enjoy seeing this movie.

There is a Friday morning group of avid shuffle board players. Is any one interested in playing on an additional day perhaps on a Monday or Tuesday morning? There is a sign up sheet if you are inter-

ested. Can't drop in? Just phone 519-853-5951, and ask for your name to be put on the list.

Have you purchased your ticket for the Maple Lodge B.B.Q chicken dinner on Thursday, June 30? The evening will have a Hawaiian theme and the South Pacific dancers will be here to entertain you. Ladies get out the grass skirts and lei's, and gentlemen get out the shirt you bought in Hawaii, and never wear.

The Centre will be closed on Friday, July 1 for Canada Day.

The person whose name was drawn this week had not put his loonie in the box. Next week the weekly 50/50 should be just over \$200.