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Resident of the Month: Araina Clark

Written by: Nancy Dupuis

A brief introductory to just who Araina Clark is; some of you may have seen this piece in the July 2021 edition of theHumm – for those of you who didn't what a great read!

A Lifelong Learner, Still On the Go - theHumm July 2021

By Sally Smith

There's a "thief" in Araina Clark's life.

"It takes away a lot of things, things you never realized it could, but one by one it marches through and takes...." Araina talks about the thief bluntly: "Reading has become more challenging. The thief took it early."

She talks about "him" waiting around a corner, waiting to steal again next week, next month, in a few minutes.

"For me, the progression [of Parkinson's Disease] has been slow, but I felt every loss, was amazed how my life was broken down into so many blocks, tiles, and then disseminated."

"I was in awe," Araina says. "I never caught up. I just kept losing, losing, losing..."

"I wouldn't recommend it," she adds wryly.

Araina has a lifetime of learning under her belt, and though the thief has quietly and insidiously stolen many things, she's still learning, tackling life with gusto, passing along what she can.

The diagnosis came in 2005, a short year after she retired from 38 years of nursing. "Then it happened — the start of the thefts."

Growing up in the '50s and early '60s, girls at the time had a choice of two careers — nursing or secretarial work. She didn't even think about it, she says — she chose nursing and received a Registered Nursing Diploma in Regina in 1967. She and her husband Gord, who worked for the provincial government of Saskatchewan, eventually left the province and headed east to Ontario, where Gord continued his own career (but with the federal government) and Araina continued nursing.

Initially she started at the Heart Institute, working alongside Dr. Wilbert Keon for five years. Then she headed to a paediatric allergist's office, before walking through the doors of the Queensway-Carleton Hospital. Her evenings were filled with learning and work too. She taught at Algonquin and the National Defence Medical Centre.

"She had five or six balls in the air at one time," Gord says.

"I learned a lot with [Dr. Keon]. That's probably where learning cemented with me. I couldn't get enough, picked up every book, enjoyed what I did." She says people often asked her why she was driven to read and learn so much. She answered with a certain glint in her eye: "I don't understand the question".

Araina knew when her arms began to swing awkwardly as she walked that something was not right; from that time it took her eight years "to admit something was wrong." She remembers her reaction. "It was not acceptable to me. I needed to get enough education... and still wouldn't admit it was happening."

Admitting she had Parkinson's helped. After that, she began to "make something of it," but, she says, she will "never really have it completely resolved."

A move to Almonte was a fresh start that Araina used to make new friends, join committees, put her brain to work on other tasks, move in different directions... and keep learning.

Answering an ad, she became part of a Patient and Family Advisory Committee at the Almonte General Hospital, where she served two three-year terms on the board. "It was what I was looking for. I made friends I would never have met any other way." Gord adds his own thoughts: "She was a bonus to them. She added a lot of expertise."

She also joined the Mississippi Mills Accessibility Advisory Committee which she now attends via Zoom. "We've made some accessibility changes to the washrooms in Gemmill Park," and made suggestions to improve both walking surfaces as well as surfaces for wheels of a walker or wheelchair. The committee also made changes at the rink for door openers, and at the library to make it easier for wheelchairs to scoot under shelves.



The River of Love

By Mary Poole

*Love is like a river it has both depth and length
and in its ever flowing way we get a lot of strength.*



*Sometimes when water's calm it doesn't show direction
We just admire the peacefulness and notice its reflection.*

*The trees, the sun, what's in our midst is doubled for our view
Just as our kind thoughts & deed are given back in two.*

*And then there's wind-flown ripples that roughen up the surface
They just might be a passing breeze if not enforced by surplus.*

*Stormy waters also come with darkness and it's terror
We pray then, this will soon be passed and this avoids an error.*

*The water gets polluted by folks who just don't care
The water might be stagnant and this we cannot share.*

*The boats upon the water - are people - you and I
Yachts, sails, canoes, row boats and such
You ask, "Which one am I?"*



*It really doesn't matter we travel at our speed
We are a colour, we have a name and that is all that we need.*

*Some folks feel secure where shallow water lies
They know their limitations so let's not criticize.*

*Others venture outward-their boat might be equipped
I hope they have the faith to float if theirs is over-tipped.*



*The river, like love is powerful it's used on many occasions
By conversion into energy and used throughout the nations.*

*This river of love is forced by little ones on its way
It branches to form some islands but yet will meet some day.*

*As I paddle on my journey with the help from God above
I hope that I'll continue in finding my way with love.*

Resident of the Month Con't

The couple were blessed with two children, Heather and Steven prior to their move from Regina to Ottawa. At Araina's convocation at the NAC, a young Steven yelled out "way to go, Mom". The Dean's response was "you definitely have a fan there!" Steven now lives in British Columbia and Heather in Ottawa.

Araina spoke candidly of her move to Orchard View – the turmoil of the move, the shock, the tough feelings of leaving home as she knew it, what it's come to.

She recently was sent to the Almonte General Hospital by ambulance and Araina asked that I write this part for all to know just how wonderful it is to be able to go to a local hospital where you know there are lots of caring folks who are going to look after you. But, the most profound statement was the one she followed up with – lying in emergency she could actually see Gord come through the door, and the look on his face as he anticipated the worst. As witnessed many days when I see Araina and Gord in the Bistro enjoying a cappuccino, this wanting to ensure your loved one is OK, is normal. A very caring couple still watching out for each other to this day – thank you, Araina and Gord for the chat and your remarkably candid comments about your life story.



Alzheimer's Society Coffee Break Fundraiser

February 6th 1:00pm

Orchard View Theatre

Discussion Topic: Dementia Friendly Community Support

Please call to reserve your spot 613-963-5000

Employee of the Month - Mark

Congratulations to Mark from Maintenance on being February's Employee of the Month! Mark is relatively new to the OVM family, but that doesn't stop him from being a great strength in the maintenance dept. Mark is quiet, kind and observant. He is very approachable and will try his absolute best no matter the task on hand. Thank you Mark for being a vital part of the team.

Testimonial - Joy Bradley

When I first arrived 4 years ago, I thought I wouldn't have any privacy. Once I figured out the routine, I thoroughly enjoy my own space and my own routine. In the mornings I go to exercise that gets me up and keeps me moving. Then I come back and enjoy watching the goats and Misty. They get so excited to see the guys come to feed them! What was very important to me was to be able to bring my dog Chloe with me. She was welcomed as a resident just like I was. Being close to my girls, was also so important. They take such good care of me. It's so wonderful to have a place like Orchard View to come to live.

There's a just-try-and-stop-me gleam in her eye when she talks about a much-needed restoration of Almonte's 100-year-old main street infrastructure. "A lot has got to be replaced. We can put our accessibility things where we want." With some imagination, you can see her rubbing her hands in glee.

And once a week she started to go with some other ladies to a day-away program through Carebridge Community Support, which "gives everybody a break," she laughs. She knows, too, that her kids have her back, frequently telling her about things they think she could use. Araina golfed for many years but now accompanies Gord to the course on occasion, riding in the cart, doing a bit of putting and enjoying the socializing at the nineteenth hole. "I'm gonna blow off that thief," she says grinning, defiance in her soft voice.

Getting back to reading, which is returning bit by bit, Araina says it's not cognition or eyesight, but rather "comprehension, changing the written word into memory." She has tried darkening the room, turning off music; everything she could to "induce the essence of reading." It's been twelve years since she read a book cover to cover, but she's working on it.

Dancing is also close to her heart. "There's a rhythm there. Maybe for everything Parkinson's takes away, it puts back some rhythm." She does wonder at times, though, with all the money put into and raised for Parkinson's research through the telethons, "where are the successes?"

So she'll be participating again this year at the Lanark North Leeds Parkinson Canada SuperWalk, which takes place on Saturday, September 11 with a Virtual Opening Ceremony at 11am. At 1pm, registered participants are welcome to join an Exercise Class in Carleton Place, Smiths Falls or Perth, or "Walk Your Own Way" in your neighbourhood. To register, donate, or for more information and details, visit donate.parkinson.ca/lanarknorthleeds or call 1-800-565-3000 x3392. All activities will follow provincial Covid guidelines. Araina is 75 this year. In her three-quarters of a century she's nursed for close to four decades, been married for over five decades, has a name that few (if any) others have, has successfully (along with her husband) raised two children, and is now managing Parkinson's Disease.

She wonders if she learned enough in her life. She thinks sometimes her life hasn't exactly turned out the way she pictured it — especially when the "thief" came along and screwed up the planning. She asks herself if she's learned enough.

Then she sits back and realizes she's still learning...

Sitting down with Araina and Gord one afternoon recently I was privy to more; that's rain with an A on either end – straight and simple to pronounce – what a unique, yet beautiful name!

Araina shared with me a bit of her childhood – born in Regina, Saskatchewan, her mother was a housekeeper and her father drove a city bus. She had no siblings and was spoiled famously by her mother's three sisters who had no children of their own. Her birth mother had been a war bride, but Araina had been adopted out at a very early age. The family moved to Oregon when Araina was just a child and she lived there for five years. Her father ran a small general grocery store complete with gas pumps. Araina remembers the candy and the comic books. Eventually her parents went their separate ways and Araina in Grade 8 at the time was sent to live with family in Victoria, BC. She recalls playing cribbage with an uncle every evening after dinner to see who would do the dishes – Araina chuckled, the aunt usually had the dishes done by the time the game was completed. Araina loved Highland dance and tap as a young girl. During this period, she often travelled by train on her own back to see her mother, a three-day trip. Just a young child, arrangements would be made to have the porter look after her each time she travelled; Araina remembers to this day going through the Rocky Mountains and the porter would load them off the train to see the deer close up; a happy memory of her childhood. She laughed when telling me this bit of the story, "I felt I was quite a world traveller by this time".

A few years later and she would end up back in Regina with her mother, always being the centre of attention of her mother's sisters. She met Gord while attending Central Collegiate Institute during her high school years. In 1967, their paths crossed again at a Valentines Dance at the nursing residence. She was on the ticket table and the rest is history – a friendship renewed from the few years prior and now love. They were engaged in September of that year and married in Regina, in December 1967. (Araina and Gord celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary in December 2022).



Keep on Smiling



Baby it's cold outside! Just means more fun in the halls of OVM!



Memory Living within our supported community

