

Art Auction and Annual Black Tie Dinner

By Neil Guthrie

This year's annual dinner was a bit different, in that it featured a silent auction for the benefit of the Art Committee. The art fund was depleted after the recent purchase of the superb Edwin Holgate portrait which now hangs in the Main Lounge – and which completes our quest to have a work in oil on canvas by all ten members of what was originally the Group of Seven. The Club had also not held an art auction since 2010, so the time seemed opportune.

Fifty-one lots were consigned by Club members, the Club itself, local artists and dealers. Pieces from the Club were works acquired before we had a rigorously defined collecting mandate, which is now limited to the Group of Seven and artists who painted or exhibited with them, as well as the Canadian Group of Painters. This meant reluctantly letting go of some choice pieces, including Tom Roberts's view of a bend in the road near Caledon, a Bell-Smith watercolour, a lovely drawing by Arthur Shilling and a large pastel by Joe Plaskett.



*Tom Roberts "Midwinter in Caledon"
sold at auction*

The pieces were displayed in the Library and the corridor leading to the Main Dining Room. They were sold in two groups, with a three-minute warning bell before the close of each round of bidding. There

was considerable activity by would-be purchasers, resulting in gross sales of approximately \$37,000 – of which the Club received about \$15,000 for the art fund. A further very generous contribution of \$5,000 was made by a member who is retiring to Italy full-time and resigning from the Club. The proceeds of the evening and that donation will be used by

the Art Committee to improve the security system for the art collection. While new acquisitions are tempting, the Committee decided to focus for the time being on safeguarding our significant collection of twentieth-century works of Canadian art.

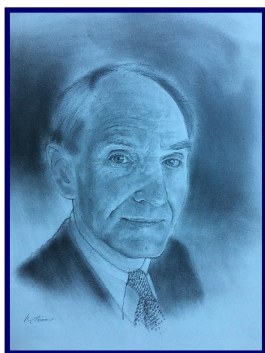
We would eventually like to upgrade our very small Emily Carr and our Tom Thomson, acquire a Varley portrait in oil, and fill gaps in our holdings of the Quebec and female artists who fall within the acquisitions policy. The Canadian art market being as hot as it is, we may need to save up for quite a while – or depend on the continued generosity of members (hint, hint).

The dinner portion of the evening was a huge success, with the usual high standard of cuisine from Chef Patrick. There was also an art theme to this part of the evening, as the toast to the Club was given by Brooke Hunter, a former chair and current member of the Art Committee, with a reply from David Hamer, also a current member of the Committee. Brooke spoke about her long association with the Club, including stories of her two member grandfathers (one, Norman Bell, a longtime Art chair and a very generous donor to the collection) and father. Brooke may have held back on some more colourful Club anecdotes she could have related, but we hope we can hear those in time.

Acknowledgement

Thanks, Don

Since @theUClub was launched in September, 2016 as the Club's quarterly newsletter, Don Rumball has been its publisher and the editor of several of its editions. Don has recently decided to pass this responsibility on to other hands and the Member Engagement and Programme Committee is actively seeking someone who would be willing to assume the role. In the meantime and on behalf of all members, I want to thank Don for the splendid work he has done in getting this project launched and making the newsletter an integral part of the Club experience.



President's Message

Ross Peebles

The Annual General Meeting is never going to rival the popularity of the Yuletide Lunch but it is an important component of the Club's governance. I want to thank the members who turned up for the meeting on October 22 as well as those who could not attend but sent in their proxies.

During the meeting, I gave a report on the state of the Club and the Board's plans for the future. Since the report was distributed in advance of the meeting, I won't repeat all that it contains. There are two points, however, that I would like to highlight.

The first concerns the need for new members. This is an issue that requires constant attention because each year we lose a certain number of members due to resignation or death. Replacing those members and adding to the base is an on-going challenge.

Without doubt, the best sources of new members are the family, friends and colleagues of our current members. Those who have visited the Club, enjoyed our hospitality and experienced the marvellous programme of activities that we offer are the most likely to want to join themselves. As we approach the Holiday Season, please think seriously about inviting prospective members to sample all that the Club has to offer. If you prefer not to raise the matter of membership yourself, you can advise our GM, Sohail Saeed, who will be pleased to follow up with the prospective member, with or without attribution to you.

During the next few months, the Membership Committee, under the chairmanship of David Hamer, will be formulating plans to increase membership. You can expect to hear more about this from David and his committee as their plans crystallize. Our aim is to expand the membership base to the point where we are much less reliant on outside functions to maintain a positive cash flow. I hope we can count on your help.

The other matter that I want to mention is the update of our strategic plan. It's been three years since the Board drafted a plan for the Club's future. We believe that now is the time for an update and, as a starting point, we will be inviting members to attend one of several group sessions so

that we can get a sense of what members value about the Club and what changes they would like to see.

I hope as many members as possible will be willing to share their opinions so that the Board can get an accurate appreciation of your collective views. Your feedback will allow us to develop some options that we can then feed back to you for comment. This is an ambitious undertaking but one that the Board is confident will bear fruit.

I would like to close by extending to you and your families my warmest greetings for the Festive Season and my very best wishes for good health and happiness in 2019.

The Penicillin: The Drink that Cures what Ails you

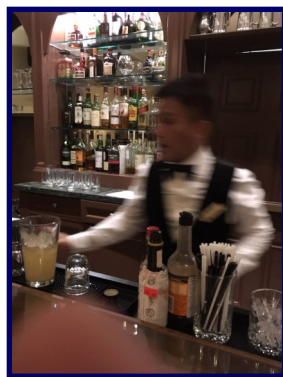
By Jeff Haylock

Coinciding with, and contributing to, the recent rejuvenation of the Bar has been the recent rejuvenation of the Club's cocktail menu. Until recently, however, the cocktail that has become something of a Club specialty wasn't on the cocktail menu at all. Instead, you had to know to approach Louis or Danny at the bar and say "I'll have a penicillin": a drink that lives up to its name and clears the sinuses, though rather more enjoyably than Buckley's.

Many of the classic cocktails have (probably spurious) origin stories. For instance, the first sidecar was supposedly ordered during the First World War at Harry's Bar in Paris (or Buck's Club in London, depending on who tells the story) by a US army captain who had arrived in the sidecar of a motorcycle. According to the *New York Times Book of Cocktails*, the inventor of the Singapore sling is universally recognized as Ngiam Tong Boon, the bartender at Raffles Hotel in Singapore in the 1910s. But it seems unclear what he invented, since nowadays at Raffles Hotel itself there are three different recipes for the Singapore sling used by different bar tenders, each of whom claims to be making the original.

The penicillin isn't similarly venerable, but it holds its own with the classics. It was invented in 2005 at a bar called Milk & Honey in New York. Since then, it's quickly spread and been subject to numerous variations – variations in the alcohol used, frozen variations, frothy variations with egg white, etc. The last time I ordered one at the Club I asked Louis about the Club's take on it. Into a cocktail shaker filled with ice go three ingredients. The first is a blended scotch, such as Famous Grouse. The second is pure fresh-squeezed lemon juice, made right at the bar. And the third

is the magic ingredient: fresh ginger syrup that Louis makes in the kitchen by simmering slices of peeled ginger in water mixed with sugar and peppercorns. After the ingredients are shaken, they go into an old fashioned glass on the rocks. For the final touch, added to the concoction is a float (i.e., a small pour) of Laphroaig, one of the smokiest and peatiest of scotches.



A flurry of activity as Louis prepares a penicillin

Next time you find yourself at the Club wondering whether you should order a Riesling or a Chardonnay, consider trying something new. Say, "I'll have a penicillin."

The Penicillin

- 1.5 oz blended scotch
- 1.5 oz fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1.5 oz ginger syrup

Shake the ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Strain into an old fashioned glass on the rocks, and top with a float of Laphroaig.

Enjoy by the fireplace.



COO's Remarks

By Sohail Saeed

The festive season is upon us, and the Club is ready. We're looking forward to hosting your office Christmas parties with the food and personal service you have come to expect. Our formal and casual dining areas are ready for your family or client dining over the season, and we will also be offering take-out service. Our ever-popular fortified wine lunch is just



around the corner, with its sumptuous menu and paired fortified wines. The wine lovers' extravaganza continues with the bakers dozen offer for the twelve days of Christmas from our holiday wine club. We have also recently introduced several old fashioned cocktails to our menu. If you haven't tried one yet, please do. I'm sure you'll approve.

Members' feedback is critical to our success. I am pleased to report that the annual survey that was sent out in September had an overwhelming response. We received 113 responses in all, 111 digitally and 2 manually. This will be repeated again, at the same time next year. The annual survey will become the benchmark for the measurement of members' views year over year, and will help us to plan for the future. I would like to thank everyone who participated and provided constructive comments.

Our efforts on social media continue to provide positive exposure to the Club, and inquiries from that avenue are increasing. In the same vein, our new website continues to attract compliments from members and non-members alike. We will continue to enhance this platform to make it informative and user-friendly. One of the new features you will notice shortly will be the concierge section in the website's members-only area. It will list services that are available from our reception for your convenience.

Visits to the Club by potential candidates for membership continue to mount. We have welcomed about a dozen new members so far this year. As I have said in the past, it is important that new members should be made to feel welcome at the Club so if you have the opportunity, please take a moment to say hello. Equally, if you have friends or colleagues who might be interested in membership, please let me know and I will happily make the necessary contacts.

We took advantage of the down-time this summer and continued with necessary repairs and maintenance. Some of the smaller roofs were completely redone and the lingering ceiling plaster repairs continue. We apologize if you have experienced any inconvenience as a result of this work. We're almost there. Our team also did a great job of clearing out the sub-basement. The next steps will be further clean-up and painting to make the area look fresh.

'Tis the Season to be jolly. I invite everyone to come by the Club, relax by the roaring fire, cherish old friendships and make new ones. We're anticipating your visit, and are always at your service.

A Remarkable Wine Trip to “The County”

by Esther E. Shipman



The annual UCT Wine Trip headed east this year to Prince Edward County. Lesser-known and -heralded than Niagara, “The County”, as it is now colloquially known, boasts a robust viniculture featuring 35 wineries and dozens of supporting events, activities and businesses (concerts, studio tours, galleries, shops, accommodation etc.).

Our day began early (though we were saved an hour’s sleep through the time change), with coffee/tea and fresh croissants at the Club, followed by a gab fest that made the two-hour-plus drive fly by. Our small but mighty group landed first at **Stanners Vineyard**, an intimate, family-run, artisanal operation housed in a unique, but visually unadorned, straw-bale structure. The history of the winery and family began to unfold and the quality of the wines became clear as the down-to-earth owners Colin Stanners and Mary Macdonald shared tastings of their outstanding wines accompanied by an outdoor demonstration of tamping the grapes from the recent 2018 harvest. Colin, who

holds a Ph.D. in physics, left behind a life in academia that had taken him and Mary to



the US, and, with assistance of his family, returned to Canada to pursue a dream in Prince Edward County.

We should not have been so surprised that the resulting wines were more than impressive, despite the early hour, as it was revealed that their entire stock of red wines was completely sold out! Instead we tasted their award-winning whites – a Riesling (two vintages) and a wonderfully distinct and unusual Pinot Gris. Plus, as Mary deftly climbed amongst the stacks of barrels to tap one on the very top row, she extracted for us a preview taste of their upcoming vintage of Pinot Noir. What an experience to launch our day!



Our next stop was a mere kilometre away at **Karlo Estates**, where we were hosted and fed with aplomb and enthusiasm by vintner Sherry Karlo. We were treated to a mind-boggling tasting of 12 different wines and vintages both indoors at the estate’s restored barn/tasting rooms and out in the fields, where we also gathered with Sherry and her partner Saxe Brickenden for a group photo atop their custom-built dry-stone bridge. Winemaker Derek Barnett, whom some of you may remember from Lailey in Niagara, is a consummate winemaker who, in the four years since joining Karlo, has brought his experience and knowledge to bear on the quality and selection on offer. We enjoyed every



minute, as well as the delicious vegan stew prepared by Sherry’s mum!

The final stop on our tour was **Closson Chase Vineyards** (literally at the corner of Closson and Chase). Again, the tasting took place in a beautifully restored historic barn, and we finished the day with a selection of three different wines, accompanied by tasting notes. Closson Chase is swank and professional and represents the more corporate side of winemaking in the County. While our visit may have lacked the personal touch of the first two stops, the wine was enjoyable and it nicely capped off a well-rounded day.

Happily ensconced for the drive home, everyone promptly fell asleep and I understand we delivered quite a chorus of purring and snores as the bus wound its way back to the city.

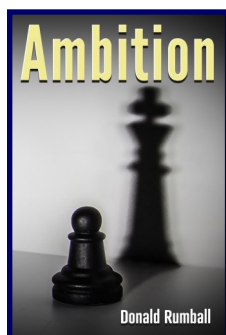
Well done Sean Lawrence for the research and selection of wineries. A truly fine day of wine, food and companionship.

Looking forward to next year with anticipation!

Announcements



The Club extends its congratulations and best wishes to members David Rankin and Ainsley Johnston, whose elegant wedding took place at the Club on November 10.



Warm congratulations to Don Rumball on the publication of *Ambition*, his new novel. "A single-minded, successful entrepreneur is cheated out of \$10 million by a big corporation. An exhilarating plunge into the vortex of entrepreneurial chutzpah."

Affiliate Clubs

The University Club of Washington, D.C.

by Ross Peebles

In mid-October, my wife and I spent a few days in the American Capital and stayed at the University Club of Washington.

The Club was founded in 1904 and has counted among its members an impressive number of well-known



public figures, including several U.S. Presidents, Justices of the Supreme Court and senior military officers. Some of the Club's principal rooms bear the names of its famous members.

The Club is conveniently located in central Washington about a ten-minute walk north of the White House, adjacent to the residence of the Russian Ambassador and directly across the street from the National Geographic Society. Our Uber driver commented that we would be staying in one of the safest parts of the city.

Judith and I had a large room on the top floor of the Club. In spite of the traffic outside, the room was relatively quiet and tastefully decorated. The furnishings were modern and there was adequate space for all our belongings. In total, the Club has 60 bedrooms occupying its top four floors.

The room rate includes a complimentary breakfast – a cooked breakfast during the week, but at the weekend, when we stayed, a rather modest continental breakfast.

Formal dinner service is provided in the Taft Dining Room. Both the food and service were fully up to expectations. There was good choice and a more-than-adequate wine list. Martini enthusiasts will especially appreciate the ritual with which these drinks are served. The head waiter brings a trolley to the table and creates a superb drink to order and, with it, a lasting memory. There is no doubt that America is the home of the cocktail.

On both evenings, a pianist entertained during dinner. On Friday, the music particularly appealed to me being mostly big band tunes from the 1940s and '50s. The player told me that he was 94 years old and has performed at the Club once a week for the last 45 years. He played virtually non-stop for over an hour and a half, then taking a break of only ten minutes. He was a real delight and a trooper into the bargain.

We very much enjoyed our short stay and I would confidently recommend the Club to anyone planning a visit to Washington.

First-ever Leacock Medal gets permanent home

Family of Harry Symons, winner of inaugural humour award, donates medal to be displayed at University Club of Toronto

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A piece of history with a connection to Orillia now has a permanent home in Toronto.

During an event Monday evening, the family of Harry Symons, the winner of the first Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour, presented the medal to the University Club of Toronto.

Symons was president of the club in 1950. He won the inaugural Leacock Medal in 1947 for his novel, *Ojibway Melody*.



Author Harry Symons at a book signing in the fifties

"He would take great pleasure at what we're doing now," said Thomas Symons, the author's son. "This club meant so much to my father."

Since Harry Symons's death in 1962, the medal has made the rounds with family members. Its last stop before coming to the University Club of Toronto was at the home of Ariadne Symons, a judge with the Superior Court of California. She made the trip to Toronto to present the medal Monday night.

Club president D. Ross Peebles was thrilled to be able to put the medal on permanent display in the University Avenue building.

"It means a lot to have this," he said, noting the importance of literary awards like the Leacock Medal. "They form, for most of us, a sort of reading list we can enjoy."

Peebles said the medal "will have a most appreciative audience" at the club.



Professor T.H.B. Symons, Club President Ross Peebles with the Leacock Medal, and Art Committee member Neil Guthrie

The University Club of Toronto is a fitting home for the historic medal, said Nathan Taylor, president of the Orillia-based Leacock Associates, who award the medal every year.

"Given the Symons family's deep connection to this club, this is a very appropriate place to put Harry's medal on display," he said. "On behalf of the Leacock Associates, I thank the family for being such careful stewards of this special medal, and the University Club of Toronto for agreeing to add it to its stunning collection of art and artifacts."

Sports and Fitness

Year in Review

By Karen Csida

Our dedicated sports and fitness members have a lot to celebrate as 2018 comes to a close. I am pleased to say that many members were dedicated users of our facilities and classes. Why do they do it? First, they have resolved to make their health a top priority and they invest the time in doing some form of exercise on most days of the week. In addition, they develop the right action plan and are not shy about seeking support. At the UCT sports and fitness centre,

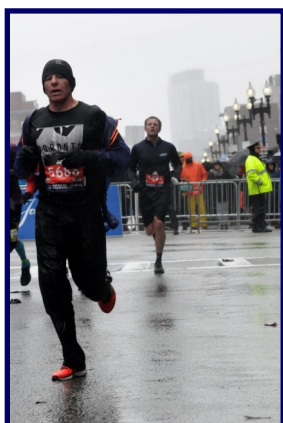


Our members enjoying group fitness during a heart-pumping noon-hour spin class

we have everything needed to keep gym workouts fresh and inspiring: state-of-the-art equipment, small group fitness classes, one-on-one

coaching and staff that takes pride in seeing our members reaching their goals. Here are some photos showing what kept our members coming back for more!

The Club's new Zero Runner is a hit, allowing our runners to opt for an occasional run indoors, especially during inclement weather. The Zero Runner provides the benefit of a zero-gravity workout, which virtually eliminates the impact on joints and targets only the muscles. It was the machine of choice for Julian Scott, who included the Zero Runner as part of his training program in preparation for the Boston Marathon in April of this year.



Julian Scott

Our Gentle Fitness enthusiasts come out every Tuesday and Thursday morning to work on their cardio, mobility, stability and strength. To quote one of the participants describing a challenging set of abdominal exercises, "euphoric!"



Gentle Fitness group

In the spotlight this year was the Pilates Reformer, an ingenious invention using a spring resistance system.

While at first sight this machine might look like a modern version of a medieval torture machine, with some coaching our members have embraced it to achieve better posture and strong, toned muscles.



Pilates Reformer



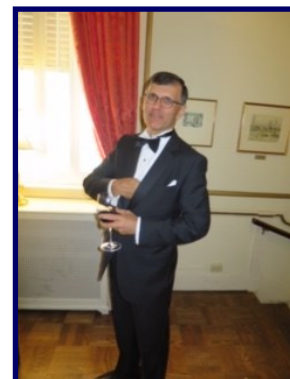
UCT golfers

This year our avid golfers enjoyed spring and fall golf outings at the Ladies' Golf Club of Toronto. These events continue to foster our relationship with Ladies', which is always gracious in welcoming our members for a round.

The annual Black Ball black tie dinner was so well attended this year that we had to move from our traditional venue of the Library to the Main Dining Room. This year the members enjoyed an interactive, hosted trivia game which included many questions about the history of the Club. Some of our youngest members won the top prizes in the different quiz categories. Congratulations to our prize-winners Jeff Haylock, David Rankin and Peter Mulvihill!

Finally, I would like to thank Maneesh Mehta for chairing the Sports and Fitness Committee for the past six years. Maneesh has worked diligently in the background to advocate for the sports section, and supported initiatives ranging from acquiring new equipment to introducing new instructors and forms of training. I would also like to thank all of the members of the Sports and Fitness Committee for their time and efforts.

2019 will mark the 15th anniversary of the 2004 redesign of the sports and fitness centre. The section has continued to evolve by adding and renewing its equipment and fostering camaraderie and sports activities such as skiing, squash, golf, cycling and running. To celebrate this milestone, I welcome your suggestions for new and innovative ways to keep you motivated and inspired in 2019 and beyond!



Maneesh Mehta

Fall Gala: Counting our Blessings

by Diana Wiley

Our Fall Gala on Saturday, October 27 was by all accounts one of the most beautiful evenings we have experienced at the Club. As the last guests drifted out into the night feeling indulged and sated, I was overwhelmed with gratitude for the treasure we have in our Club staff and the jewel box that is our historic clubhouse. Year after year, one perfectly executed event follows another, the result of meticulously coordinated team efforts by our indefatigable staff. We really cannot thank them enough for the creative imagination, effort and attention that go into creating these magical evenings.

On this particular night, the clubhouse had never looked more glamorous. Every room shimmered in candlelight, creating an enchanting setting for the gorgeous dinner that was to come. The food was simply spectacular: from the exquisite hors d'oeuvres through to the beautifully presented and delicious dinner. Contemporary in appearance but with a comforting nod to tradition, every dish looked sensational and tasted wonderful. The service was impeccable throughout the evening, and the staff found exactly the right balance in being both attentive and discreet, dealing with the inevitable last-minute changes gracefully and keeping our guests feeling happy and indulged.

That night we hosted some of Canada's elite jazz musicians in a sensational double bill (thanks in large part to member Cornelia Mew's generous gift, for the fifth year running!), with the exuberant drummer / singer Mark Kelso sharing the lead role with pianist / singer Elizabeth Shepherd. The concert was great fun, with some edgier numbers mixed in with contemporary takes on beloved standards. Bassist Rich Brown and trumpeter William Sperandei wove in a multitude of sounds, colours and textures, and Mark brought the house down with a virtuosic drum solo.

Prior to their performance, the musicians had joined our guests in lively dinner conversation, creating personal connections to their music. In his remarks to the crowd at the end of the evening, Mark made a point of commenting on how beautifully the Club had treated them and how attentive an audience our guests had been. He emphasized that this is unusual. The reputation we have built over the years through our warm, welcoming approach to musicians is largely responsible for our ability to attract the calibre of

performing artists who regularly play at our Club. When I asked Elizabeth Shepherd, who flew in from Montreal that morning and was flying out again the next day, whether she would be willing to come back to the Club, she responded, "In a heartbeat!!"

This kind of evening (especially at these ticket prices!) cannot be experienced outside of a club setting. The more members support our events by attending and bringing guests, the more resources we have to sustain this high calibre of programming. Inviting friends and colleagues to these stellar events is also an elegant way of promoting the allure of being a UCT member.

In this season when we count our blessings, please join me in showing appreciation to our wonderful staff whenever you have a chance.



The Gala Reception



Mary Graham and Bianca Roth