

# CANDOER News



A quarterly Newsletter dedicated to Communicators AND Others Enjoying Retirement

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Welcome to the latest issue of the Newsletter dedicated to the **CANDOERS** (Communicators **AND** Others Enjoying Retirement). This **Newsletter** will be published quarterly. New issues will be posted on the Web for your reading enjoyment on or about, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

The **CANDOER** web site and **Newsletter** may be viewed at: [www.candoer.org](http://www.candoer.org).

*The success of this newsletter depends on you. I need story contributors.*

Do you have an interesting article, a

nostalgia item, or a real life story you would like to share with others? If you do, please send it to me at the following e-mail address: [candoercat@gmail.com](mailto:candoercat@gmail.com)

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The **Newsletter** will be available in three formats: as a Web Page; as an Adobe PDF file; and as a Microsoft Word document.

The PDF file and Microsoft Word document will allow you to download and print the newsletter exactly as if I had printed it and mailed it to you.

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## Cat's Corner

Well summer has arrived in Southern Maryland. It was a very unusual winter and spring. February set a record for the warmest on record and then April came along and we had the temperatures we should have had in February. Now here it is June and we are having temperatures

like we normally get in August. I hope August is not like our normal June.

The one-liners you see in this issue were obtained from Facebook and were posted by several different Facebook friends.

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**Be careful when you follow the masses ...  
sometimes the "M" is silent!**

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### **Stressful Jobs**

By James F. Prosser

**CANDOER** members in their Foreign Service careers undoubtedly have had a very stressful job which stood out in their memory. Why not share it in this forum?

My posting in Leopoldville, Congo in the early 1960's was the location of my personal most stressful job. It lasted for more than two years. Readers, if they can recall those years, know that very bad things were happening there at that time. But this article isn't about that period of my career. In older editions of the **CANDOER** News I've written about them.

When assigned to Geneva 1974-78, the only stress for our family was lack of sufficient funds to enjoy life there, for the US dollar versus the Swiss currency was awfully bad for us. To rent decent housing within the housing allowance we had at a price we could almost afford, we found a place in the country about 20 kms north of Geneva in the village of Tannay on the shores of Lac Lemman. I took the Swiss commuter train to/from work daily.

But this article is about someone else's stressful position, much more different and tougher than mine.

One of my neighbors (Murray) was MOTOROLA'S corporate vice president for their international foreign currencies, of which the company had a lot. He was an expert in playing the foreign currency markets worldwide. He had control of all their foreign funds and his sole job was to assure MOTOROLA did not lose much or anything in the wildly fluctuating international money markets at that time. He was a very heavy trader on the Swiss

money market daily.

Murray and I rode the commuter train regularly. On the ride home in the evening, I almost could tell from looking at him how his day went. If he looked happy and jovial, it had to be a pretty good day financially for MOTOROLA. If he got on the homeward bound train looking unhappy, I didn't ask but eventually heard things like "We lost tens of millions in (name any currency)." Murray once said to me, "Jim, you can't appreciate what happens when the dollar falls 27 cents against the Japanese yen. That's millions of dollars to MOTOROLA!"

The CEO of MOTOROLA (in Chicago) was always on him to cut losses and better the company financial position of the corporation. Because there is always a financial currency market open someplace in the world (London, Frankfurt, Zurich, Tokyo, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, and New York), Murray had a TELEX and financial news printer installed in the basement of his home in Tannay! (Remember, Al Gore had not yet invented the Internet or computers.) He even had sound-proofing installed in his basement room so that the clacking of the tele-printers did not disturb his family's sleeping. But that had ancillary problems for him, as he often missed opportunities to buy/sell foreign currencies to profit MOTOROLA. After about five years of this, he couldn't take it anymore because of the extremely stressful life style he had, so he left MOTOROLA and went into other endeavors which left him to enjoy life to this day and miss a potential fatal heart attack.

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**So when is this "old enough to know better"  
supposed to kick in?**

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### **Take the Money and Run: The Bob Catlin Story**

**My** last four years of government service I was detailed to the Office of the Manager, National Communications System (OMNCS).

One of my many duties was an action

officer for a quarterly newsletter they published titled "NS/EP Telecom News."

Shortly after I retired they published, in this newsletter, two tongue-in-cheek tribute stories about my retirement. This issue was only distributed internally, within the OMNCS.

The two stories are repeated below:

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After much speculation and a series of secret meetings with senior Administration officials, Mr. Bob Catlin, NCS, Office of the Joint Secretariat (NJ), an action officer of the small but potent NS/EP Telecom News (AO-SBPNS/EPTN), will leave the Federal Government for greener pastures after a long and distinguished career.

"We're devastated," said Chuck Caputo, Chief of the NJ Government Activities Team (CNJGAT). "I mean, we knew he was thinking about it, but we never thought he'd really do it."

"Maybe it was something I said," wondered Navy Captain Harvey Gannon, OMNCS Assistant Manager Joint Secretariat (AMJS). "Lord knows, I always tried to be tactful."

Catlin's departure ends weeks of speculation, during which he met with senior Administration officials including President Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Chelsea Clinton, and, according to one informed source, Socks the Cat. Informed of Catlin's final decision, President Clinton, who just returned from the D-Day celebrations in France, shook his head sadly and said, "I sure hope that the check doesn't bounce."

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### **NJ After Catlin: What Next?**

The OMNCS Office of the Joint Secretariat pondered its fate today after the departure of one of its key staff members, Mr. Bob Catlin. According to one unconfirmed report, key advisers to Navy Captain Harvey Gannon met late into the night following Catlin's announcement to ponder alternatives. According to one well-placed

source that was present at the meeting, the group was most concerned about probable disruptions to the NCS electronic bulletin board activities. "It took us more than two hours to find the 'on' switch," he said, "and once we found it, no one knew the password; no one except Bob, of course."

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**The fact there is a stairway to Heaven and a highway to Hell says a lot about anticipated traffic numbers!**

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### **Charm City**

By Bob Catlin

In July of 2015, during my yearly check up with my urologist, it was discovered that my PSA had jumped from 4.2 to 5.9. The urologist suggested that I have a biopsy of my prostate.

He said if I did not have such a family history of cancer he might have let that PSA level pass until it reached 7 or higher. As a background, both my Mother (breast cancer that went to her lungs) and Father (prostate cancer that was Stage 4 before it was caught) and four of Dad's five brothers died of prostate cancer. Also, both my brothers were treated successfully for prostate cancer and my sister for breast cancer, four times. Because of this history he felt it was necessary to have the biopsy.

In August I had the biopsy. In September I received the results. I had Early Stage prostate cancer.

Since that diagnosis I have learned that several CANDOERs have also experienced prostate cancer. The doctor told me that if every man lived past 90 years of age that it is a 95 percent chance he would have prostate cancer.

After getting the diagnosis, the doctor sent the biopsy samples out to be tested for the type of cancer. We needed to know if it was a slow growing type or an aggressive type like my Dad had.

In October we learned it was a very slow growing cancer. He felt that if we did nothing I would probably die of something else.

That January Nancy and I went to

Florida for two months. During the stay in Florida I researched treatments options and the "wait and see" option.

When I returned to Southern Maryland in March I went back to the urologist and told him I was not willing to "wait and see." I wanted to have the prostate removed.

He suggested I contact Johns Hopkins and gave me the name of a doctor who could perform that surgery. I called to set up an appointment and was told, "I am sorry, we will not remove your prostate. We do not recommend this type of treatment in men over 75." I was 77 at that time.

The Johns Hopkins surgeon referred me to a Johns Hopkins Oncologist by the name of Song. I set up an appointment with him for April.

We met at his office in the Sydney Kimmell Comprehensive Cancer Center in the Weinberg Building of the Johns Hopkins Medical Center.

After reviewing my biopsy results and taking another PSA test, Dr. Song recommended that I do the "wait and see" option.

I told him I was not willing to do that. "You are right, something else may kill me and that something else would be worrying about what the cancer was doing." I am a worrier. I knew I would be constantly wondering if the cancer had all of a sudden become aggressive.

We then discussed the three options he suggested were available for me: 1. Radiation Seeds; 2. Cryogenics (freezing); or 3. Radiation treatments.

1. Radiation seeds – We eliminated this option because about every two years I have to have a TURP procedure done on my prostate;
2. Cryogenics – He felt that this should be the very last option for anyone.
3. Radiation – In both of our opinions, if I was not going to "wait and see," was my only option.

I asked him to set up treatment as

soon as possible, but hoped it would be after the New Year.

Because I have IBS he said he would set it up for 40 treatments instead of the normal 32 so I would receive less radiation for each treatment.

I then started checking into where I would stay during the treatments. It turns out that they only do the treatments Monday through Friday but not on holidays. This meant, including holidays, I would be there for nine weeks. Johns Hopkins had two hotels across from the main hospital where long term patients could stay. One was \$54 a night, including parking and the other was \$81 a night, including parking. If I went home on weekends and holidays I would still have to pay seven days a week or they would not guarantee the room when I returned after the weekend or holiday. This amounted to a LOT of money.

Dr. Song suggested I contacted the American Cancer Society representative in the hospital. I did and she said they had a free place to stay if I lived more than 50 miles from Baltimore. It was 67 miles from my door to the front door of Johns Hopkins Medical Center. This free place was called The Hope Lodge. It is one of 36 throughout the US that are run by the American Cancer Society (ACS).

Dr. Song notified me that he had an opening and that my treatments would start on December 22. If I did not take that start date the next opening was in April, which would have meant a pretty much wasted summer.

I called the ACS representative and made reservations for the 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

One of the many rules of the "Hope Lodge" is that you must have a "caretaker" with you.

December 21 Nancy and I packed up the car and went to Baltimore (to be exact 636 West Lexington Street). The facility was located directly across the street from the Ronald McDonald House and about four miles from the Sydney Kimmell Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins.

The facility has 26 rooms, a large kitchen with four stoves, six refrigerators, four dish washers, etc. It also had a huge dining room and a lounge area with a 60 inch television on the Dish Network and free Wi-Fi, a library with several hundred books, and a game room.

The bedrooms rooms were huge. In the room was a large bathroom, a large closet, two beds, a desk, two lounge chairs and a dresser. On the dresser was a 21 inch flat screen TV hooked up to rabbit ears. You could get five channels; all of them Baltimore channels. Being hooked up to rabbit ears instead of the Dish Network was done by the manager of the Lodge to encourage people to gather in the lounge area and not hide in their rooms.

To get back and forth to appointments they had a seven passenger Ford van driven by Bruce Green. Bruce is a great guy with a unique sense of humor and an outstanding attitude.

You had to furnish you own meals but everyone had a lockable cupboard, part of a refrigerator, and part of a freezer to store your food. In addition, they furnished all the pots, pans, plates, cups, etc.

Once or twice a week some group would come in and furnish us a free meal that they prepared on the premises. Not always the greatest food, but it was free and therefore Nancy did not have to prepare a meal.

For about the first two weeks, until after the New Year's holiday, there were only twelve of us staying in the lodge, six patients and their caretakers. After that the facility filled up in a hurry.

It was quite an experience. I got to talk with other people who were going through the same thing I was. Of the 26 patients in the facility about half were being treated at the University of Maryland Medical Center and the rest at Johns Hopkins. We were within walking distance of the University facilities, but because of the cold weather most opted to take the van.

10 of the 26 patients were being treated for prostate cancer. Several were

Stage 2, two were Stage 3 and two were Stage 4. I was the only one with Early Stage Cancer. All the other patients with Stage 2, 3 and 4 cancer had either esophageal cancer or some other cancer in the upper part of the body. One Stage 4 patient said he was considered terminal, if the treatments did not work.

My appointments for treatment were at 11:20 a.m. Monday through Friday. The treatment required two things of me: One - I had to have an empty colon. Two - I had to have a full bladder. This required that at 11 p.m. every night I take four tablespoons of Miralax and then at 2:30 a.m. four tablespoons of Milk of Magnesia. At 9:30 a.m. I had to start drinking 36 ounces of water and have it in my system by no later than 10:40 a.m. This insured that my bladder was full and the colon empty...and let me tell you there was no doubt both of these things happened, every day.

The treatment itself took about 20 minutes. I would arrive at the hospital at about 10:50 every day. Clock in. Get out of my clothes and put on two hospital gowns and go to the waiting room. Even though I was scheduled for 11:20 every day, if they were running late, it could be as late as 12:20 before I got treated.

I was usually back to the "Lodge" by 1 p.m., if the treatments were on time.

This routine got really boring after a while, but entirely necessary.

Now my take on "Charm City." I hope none of you are from Baltimore because I am about to trash your city. I found **nothing** charming about Charm City. There is not a street between the Lodge and the Hospital that is not broken up and rough. The streets and parks were so full of trash it looked like you were travelling in a landfill. There were hundreds of empty, falling down buildings, even in the downtown area. There were homeless on nearly every corner begging for money. No one stopped at stop signs or red lights. They just ignored them. They weren't even a suggestion. The pedestrians were even worse than the drivers. You could be

travelling down a street doing 25 mph and some idiot would step out between two parked cars, hold up their hand for you to stop, and walk right out in front of you. If they did bother to go to a crosswalk they ignored the traffic signals.

The experience at "The Hope Lodge" was the greatest. I made several friends that I am still in contact with. One who lives over in LaPlata that loves to fish like I do. We already have plans to meet for a couple fishing trips this summer.

If you ever have to have treatment for Cancer, of any kind, and have to travel a distance for the treatments, contact the ACS and see if you can stay at a Hope Lodge. You will find it to be a great experience!

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**When you're dead you don't know your dead! It is only difficult for others! It's the same way when you're stupid!**

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### Assignment New Delhi

By Mike McCaffrey

Certainly, the readership in the **CANDOER** has many tales to tell regarding their myriad assignments overseas. If I may, please allow me to relate a few things that pop into mind during our days in New Delhi, circa 1980-82 ...

#### THE SNAKE:

We had recently arrived in Delhi from an assignment in beautiful Bonn, Germany. Bonn, before the reunification with the then East Germany, was "clean as a whistle." It was rather obvious that Delhi was going to be a bit different.

We lived in our dedicated housing area right across a small street from the Embassy in Delhi. The housing area was quite nice, many conveniences for the residents (large softball STADIUM with lights for night games, broadcast booth for play/play, large stands for onlookers ... large American Community Support Association [ACSA] building housing a very nice restaurant, bowling alley, pub, snack bar, and full sized Olympic swimming pool

with lounges and beach chairs with poolside service). The Embassy GSO staff worked very hard to ensure the residents were fully supported in life outside of the work environment.

With the housing area "a stone's throw" from the Embassy, many folks chose to go back to their apartments for lunch, I know I did. Again, we were very new to Delhi at the time, and the sights and sounds were, particularly after Germany, quite different for us in the beginning. On one of those initial days, as I was returning to work from lunch, a "snake charmer" was right in front of the back gate to the Embassy. He had two pretty large wicker baskets on either side of his shoulders, supported by a pole. As I approached the gate, the guy sort of cut me off, put the baskets on the ground, and took the cover off one of the baskets. Out popped the BIGGEST/LONGEST SNAKE I had ever seen (King Cobra)! The darn thing charged out of that basket so fast that the "charmer" lost total control. The snake charged **right at me**, with the handler running behind the thing, yelling and trying to catch it with his hands. I, in turn, did the best "open field running" I ever did since my best days of high school football! I zigged ... the snake zigged ... I zagged ... the snake zagged! I ran a good twenty yards down that small street, looking back over my shoulder, and the snake was mimicking my every move! Finally, the little handler managed to grab hold of the thing and carried it back to the basket! Delhi is HOT in the summers, and I was drenched, not to mention totally pooped (and terrified). I got more than a few odd stares when I finally entered the Embassy to go back to work.

#### SUN STROKE:

I mentioned that Delhi was VERY HOT during the summer months there (They also have a "winter" season when the mornings are brisk, but the days warm up nicely a bit later). One day, I was returning to the apartment for lunch when I saw a guy about 15 yards in front of me, who appeared to be staggering down the main sidewalk in the compound. I picked up the

pace greatly and caught up to him, thinking he was in some type distress, particularly sun stroke. I asked if he was OK, and he replied he was "better than OK, I'm just admiring this beautiful housing area!" I asked if he just arrived, and he told me that he was just visiting from our Embassy in *Bangladesh*. That provided all the explanation I needed for his obvious trying to see as much as possible on his initial walk in our compound. Bangladesh! Whew! I felt VERY lucky to be in Delhi at that point and not there! I told a few folks in the office later about this and they all laughed. We all had our feelings about being in India, but I guess that guy made some of us appreciate what we had for convenience/living arrangements where we were.

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**Granma says think positive. I fell down the stairs today and thought, I haven't moved that fast in ages!**

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### **My Story**

By Judy Chidester

The story I tell that gets the most chuckles is that when I went to apply to the Foreign Service I could meet the requirements to be a Clerk, Stenographer, Secretary and Cryptographer. I didn't want to be a Clerk, Stenographer or Secretary so I applied as a Cryptographer - then went home and looked it up in the dictionary.

I had trouble passing the typing test since I'd been working on electric typewriters for three years and the test was given on an old manual. The Personal Officer handling the applications said I didn't really pass the test but it was evident I could type so she was sending me through.

I waited and waited and finally got the call to go to Washington. Upon arrival we were given another typing test on another old manual typewriter.

Then I went to training. I was immediately entranced by EVERYTHING and EVERYONE. Training was going well with Mel Roane, Mr. Odell, Henry, Lindy, Opal

and another woman whose name I don't recall.

After about two weeks I heard Mr. Roane on the phone saying "I don't care what she did on your test - she's doing fine up here!" I always felt they were talking about me and was immensely appreciative.

I was in training during the election of John F. Kennedy so we were held up and no one could go overseas for a period. I was lucky that Henry and Lindy took me under their wing for some special training on writing service messages - and reading them.

At that time Rangoon sent in their "Weeka" report encrypted and by pouch. They would have me sit down with those, sometimes six pages, of encrypted text pasted onto yellow legal pad paper and I would type it into the machine to decrypt it, then paste it up and type it onto forms for distribution. Good practice.

At my first post, Amman, we didn't even have a teletype machine so everything was typed directly onto the MEC. Luckily we were "handed" teletype tape for incoming messages so we could run that through the machine for decrypting - and, of course, working out the garbles.

Those were, I guess, the "bad old days" but I really loved them.

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**I am one step away from being rich! All I need now is the money!**

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**Yes memsahib!**

by Tom Millerin

This story happened in Cairo in the early 70's. At the time, I was a dependent (now commonly referred to as an "eligible family member").

My father was the B&F officer at the Interest Section on his third DoS posting. These were the days that I lovingly refer to as "The Colonial Times" when cocktail and dinner parties were an almost nightly occurrence and the ladies wore white gloves to their afternoon tea parties. (And yes, the spouses were also included in the

annual performance reviews).

We had just settled into our new three story home in Maadi and the folks had unpacked and hired a housekeeper/cook (actually it was probably more mother that had done the unpacking and hiring). The housekeeper/cook that mother hired was Sala. He was probably around forty years old at the time, a slender man with fairly limited English. As dictated by protocol at the time, a dinner was arranged with either the Charge d'affaires or DCM as the guest of honor (not too sure which but do recall it was someone in the upper echelons).

The day of the dinner, there was the normal hustle bustle throughout the house. The cleaning, the cooking, the setting up of the bar (I was assigned as the barkeeper), and setting up the dinner table with the best dinnerware they had at the time. I am pretty sure that mother did most of the cooking with Sala being the sous chef. The design of the house had the dining room next to the kitchen with a pass-through window between the two rooms. Mother had set a little bell at her place at the table and had told Sala that when she rings the bell he is to serve the food through the window. Sala's immediate (and standard) response was "Yes memsahib".

The guest arrived, drinks are consumed and at the appropriate time the guest are ushered into the dining room and everyone takes their place. Once everyone is seated mother picks up her little bell and rings it. Sala being the diligent servant he was, upon hearing the bell, pushes open the doors to the window separating the dining room and kitchen. The next thing that happens is my folks, their guest (those that did not have their back to the serving window), saw Sala's leg come out of the window, following by his posterior, followed by the rest of his body.

There is no doubt in my mind that Sala thought that the lady of the house was one strange bird, but if she wants me to serve through this little window what options do I have other than "Yes memsahib!!!"

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See you next quarter!

**KEEP THE STORIES COMING!**

Enjoy life, but be safe!