

Robert Gordon Gaetz - by Bruce Douglas

I met Gord in the Lord Simcoe Hotel in Toronto in 1972. There he interviewed me for a job with Seymour Epstein's broadcast engineering consulting company called Imagineering Limited. They were designing and building the Global Television Network. We worked together for a couple of years building Global's studios on Barber Greene Road then Global's mobile television van.

After Imagineering we stayed in touch from time to time. Gord liked to help me with projects. He always had very good ideas and suggestions and would work long and hard to get things done. He enjoyed the home cooked meals and the rumands (rum & cokes), his only rewards. He became a part of our family, nearly an uncle to my sons Michael & Brian.

Gord walked. It was his thing. When he walked he thought. One day when he was out for a walk he stopped in to a drug store to buy his favourite toothpaste. He was perplexed by the many brands, variations and sizes. He subsequently coined the phrase "product proliferation with obscure differentiation" which I use more and more every year. Perhaps this is at the heart of the current 'occupy' fad. Too much.

Gord was a gentle solitary soul. He once described himself as a loner but not lonely. He was quiet but liked to talk once he started, and quite humorous too. He was thorough and had very high standards. I'm sure he was, at times, appalled by my 'that's good enough' approach to getting things done. But things did get done when he and I went at them.

I don't know much about Gord's early years. I remember him saying he was born in Regina, SK (January 31, 1942). His childhood was spent in Edmonton. He told me he went to a Catholic boarding school. I got the impression that the experience was not really enjoyable for him. His dad gave him summer jobs doing grounds and equipment maintenance at the radio station's transmitter site - all alone. Gord graduated from University in Physics. He spent time in Montreal working for RCA during the ramp up for Expo 67. He built and operated Editel's Supertruck mobile television van that broadcast Canadians & Expos hockey & baseball games. At RCA he met

Seymour who later lured him to Toronto in 1972 to build the Global Television Network.

Gord never really liked Toronto. He had an apartment near Yonge & Eglinton because the area had lots of restaurants. Gord didn't cook. I occasionally visited him to play 'computer'. He always had two or three and knew them intimately. His hobby was to conquer Windows in every possible way. He also used them to analyze the stock market. The fridge was always empty except for ice, coke and chocolate chip cookies.

In the late '90s Gord wanted to leave Toronto but had no idea where he would like to live. He wanted to revisit the places of his youth and find a city where he could exist comfortably. It had to be safe so he could do his walking. It had to be warmer than Toronto and have lots of restaurants. That was the genesis of 3 trips to western Canada, our '98 "Storic Tour" of Alberta, our '99 "Elderly Crossing" of Canada and a BC trip in 2000. Gord handled hotels and meals. I provided the transportation. We found his first school in Winnipeg and his home in Edmonton. We found his grandfather's statue in Red Deer. We visited Waterton Lake where Gord and his parents went on vacation. We visited his cousin Pat's daughters Donna and Val in Vancouver. We toured Vancouver Island. Gord liked Victoria where he subsequently moved in 2001. There he started using the name Robert. I think he wanted to leave Gord behind in Toronto.

We will remember Gord for many things, among them, his method of sealing a loaf of bread by twisting the bag and wrapping it back over itself. Pretty good for a guy who never bought groceries.

Ed Bogdanowicz, who occasionally worked with Gord at Imagineering and knew who he was at RCA, says... "I had a lot of respect for his intelligence and abilities. He was a nice and kind person with a keen sense of humour that could make you laugh in hysterics, even when in the midst of trying to solve almost impossibly difficult technical problems, which he always managed to do."

Guy Sicotte, who worked at Editel with Gord in 1971, says... "I remember he enjoyed Dubonnet on the rocks, after along day on a mobile. And

it's true he liked to walk, and was often in his own world while he was walking. We had a 4 or 5 month contract with French CBC in Montreal where we did a one hour, live variety show, 5 days a week, in a shopping centre. CBC was providing the crew, but we were responsible for the technical facilities. I remember that more than once, Gordie, upset with the typical TV bullshit, would go for a walk in the shopping centre, loose track of time and come back after we'd been on the air for a good while. He was always relaxed when he returned from his walks. I'm sorry I lost track of him, and sorry to find out he passed away. Glad he had you as a friend."

Mary Forsey-Hood: Gord and I had wonderful conversations about everything and nothing! He was such a gentle person. I will always remember him buying Wintario tickets because if we won we were going to Truffles at the Four Seasons on Avenue Road for dinner - alas, it never came to be.

Gord's Lineage

Gord's Grandfather **Rev. Leonard Gaetz**

Leonard Gaetz was born at Musquodobit, N.S., in 1841 and died at Red Deer in 1907. In 1865 he married Caroline Blowers Hamilton, who was born at Selma, N.S. in 1845 and died at Red Deer in 1906. They had a family of eleven children. Rev. Gaetz, an ordained Methodist minister, who served his church until 1883, due to ill health left the ministry and moved to the Red Deer Valley. He settled on parts of Section 16, 17, 20 and 21 holding 1200 acres in total. In 1890 he gave a half interest in his land to the Railway Company for the townsite of Red Deer.

Gord's Father **Gerry Gaetz**

Gerry Gaetz came to CJCA Edmonton as Manager in 1948, and his tenure was a long one. He had begun his career as a Broadcast Engineer and was Chief Engineer at CJOC Lethbridge in 1938 when he was transferred to CKCK Regina, as Station Manager.

In 1942, Gerry went to CKRC Winnipeg, also as Manager, and it was from there that he moved to CJCA. Years later, he moved offices while in Edmonton to become an Executive with All-Canada Mutually Operated Stations (ACMO), which later morphed into Selkirk Communications. It was in that capacity that Gerry Gaetz took up duties in Vancouver in the 1960s, and from which position he retired after a very successful broadcasting career.