



St. Catharines Torch Club

April 2016 Newsletter

David Sydor

David Sydor spent most of his career as a teacher, a principal and a curriculum supervisor in the Niagara area. He has taught part time for Brock as well. He taught the Principal Qualification program for several years, and taught Primary/Junior language arts in the Faculty of Education at Brock University. He is still teaching at Brock in the International Education Program on a part-time basis.

Next Meeting

- Thursday, April 14, 6 pm social hour, 7 pm dinner.
- Best Western, St. Catharines.
- **Dinner:** Macedonian salad, grilled salmon with hollandaise sauce, market vegetables, baked potato, vanilla ice-cream crepes with raspberry sauce, tea and coffee.
- Cost: \$25.
- **Speaker:** David Sydor.
- **Topic:** Poetry in Popular Songs.
- Please let your phone captain know whether you are coming.
- If you require a special meal, please contact Doreen Peever or Julia Frankel.
- If you need a ride, contact David Warren at 905-934-9765.

Poetry in Popular Songs

The presentation will include some excerpts from familiar poems (Shakespeare, Pratt, Blake, Poe and others) and snippets from songs that have been (or are) popular not only for their music but especially for their lyrics. There are parallels between poetry and some songs that have literary characteristics, including metaphor, personification and other literary devices. The poems and songs will be framed by Levitin's (The World In Six Songs) categories of song.

Meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2016. Minutes by Abraham Rempel.

Location: Best Western
Time: 6:30 - 9:30 PM
Attendance: 29

Welcome: Michael Manley-Casimir
(President)

Our president reiterated that we need to invite guests to Torch. He asked that we bring someone next meeting – we had none on this day.

Toast to the Queen: Michael Manley-Casimir

Invocation: Doreen Peever

Speaker Introduction: Susan Drake

Susan and Anne worked together for over twenty years at Brock University, and became close friends. During those years, Anne received a prestigious grant for researching children and the media. From that came a further study of children for her presentation to Torch.

***Bullying and Cyberbullying* by Anne Elliott**

Anne quoted Nelson Mandela and noted that bullying is a worldwide phenomenon. Bullying is essentially a lack of empathy for others. Although bullying is far from limited to our present time, the Internet with its social media is highly relevant. Cyberbullying is made easier by its lack of personal contact. Cyberbullying is most often anonymous.

Bullying usually targets the vulnerable, the social misfits, the poor and even the elderly. Most people have experienced bullying, especially as children. It is a health issue that requires awareness of the problem, special training for teachers, and the deliberate cultivation of empathy at all levels of society. We can all play a role in combating bullying and cyberbullying.

Anne recommended reading *The Empathetic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* by Jeremy Rifkin. Rifkin's book makes the case that we are fundamentally an empathetic species. That would be the lesson of history as we moved from "the rise of the great theological civilizations, to the ideological age that dominated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the psychological era that characterized much of the twentieth century, and the emerging dramaturgical period of the twentieth century." To this end Rifkin has coined the term, "homo-empathicus," altogether an inscrutable mouthful, but the rise of social consciousness has been well documented by many modern historians. Nevertheless, Rifkin still asks, "Can we reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth?"

Robert Cooper ably fielded the ensuing questions and comments. Some were highly personal and very appropriate. No doubt Anne's talk struck a chord with our Torch members. Their empathy was unhesitant and genuine.

Thanks to the Speaker: Robert Cooper
With his longtime work in ADHD support, "Coop" has his own sense of empathy, and thanked Anne accordingly.