

JIM & HELEN HORRIGAN

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Good crowd for crib tourney despite 'oopsie' on right date

By MILDRED LAWRENCE

FIVE-MILE — My New Year's resolution has to be to see that my days and dates match. The last crib tournament was advertised for Tuesday, Dec. 9 and some showed up Monday night, the actual Dec. 9 date. We're sorry about that.

However, a fair crowd turned up on Tuesday night and the winners were: First — Lois Fenton and Janet Plante; Second — Jim and Helen Horigan; Third — Herb and Erna Kadatz; Fourth — Bev Erwin and

Cecil Lawrence. Next one is Jan. 7, 1986.

Don't forget that our raffle draw is close. We would like the books handed in on Saturday when we will be at the Co-op selling. Should you miss us, the girls in Customer Service are always helpful and if you put your books and money in an envelope with your and our name on it we will get it.

The draws on the raffle will be made at the Co-op store on Dec. 24 at 1 p.m. Tickets will be available that day. Results of the draw will be posted in the Co-op, in local papers and over local radio.

Birthday greetings to Florence and Art Blimke and anniversary greetings to Carl and Edna Flohr. May you all have many more.

Get-well wishes to Elsie Lawrence who had the misfortune to fall and break her hip, and also to everyone else in the hospital or recuperating.

Congratulations to Murray Donald

who won the canoe raffled by the Bezanson Legion Auxiliary. It is often said that it is nice when one can "paddle their own canoe."

Ticket sales were good at the Prairie Mall last week and there was lots of help selling.

Eleanor Blimke was down south where sister Colleen, on the Brandon, Man., college basketball team, was playing in tournaments at Calgary, Lethbridge and Edmonton. Colleen is home for the Christmas break.

Ernie Pellerin has taken the position of president; Errol Blimke, vice-president; Joyce Blimke, secretary; Val Black, treasurer; Clara Kapalka, rentals. We have four new members on the board, along with five others from previously. Our board has always served us well. I will be giving the names of all board members next time along with the many duties they do so well.

Hope everyone has a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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20 years of coffee and camaraderie with the CO-OP SENATORS

By CHRISTINA GRANT
Herald-Tribune staff

There are no membership fees, no agenda, no formal meeting rooms and they don't keep attendance.

But you can set your clock to their schedule and if anyone is late — well, they better have a good excuse.

Meet the Co-op Senators.

"Every morning the store's open, we're here" says Wesley Hudz, a retired Sexsmith farmer and one of about 12 regulars who meet at 8:30 a.m. sharp downstairs at the Grande Prairie Co-op cafeteria every day except Sunday.

The men drink coffee, occasionally eat breakfast and talk.

Ed Coney, a long time Bezanson resident, is one of the group's founders. At 87, he's also the oldest and the group's self-appointed spokesman.

"We give Mulroney his orders every day. Only trouble is, he doesn't listen," Coney says with a chuckle. "And we give city hall a going-over when they need it."

Coney started coming to the Co-op with his buddy Henry Dumas (now deceased) over 20 years ago for coffee. A couple more friends grew to a full table's of regulars.

Today numbers are steady despite some members passing on. There always seems to be younger men on the sidelines although the average age at the table right now is 75.

The 'Senators' moniker evolved one Christmas season.

"The girls (waitresses) make us cake every Christmas, and we give them chocolates. We were wondering what to put on the card. I suggested 'The Senators' and it stuck," recalls Coney.

The men carry the title with good humor. Since they get together regularly and thoroughly discuss all current matters ("Everything but religion" according to Coney), it seems appropriate.

The 'has-beens' have also been around for 20 years

At the back of the Co-op dining area another group of men meet regularly.

They too call themselves 'senators', but they don't like the name as much as the older guys.

The men call themselves 'the has-beens' and most have been getting together for 20 years or more.

"It's not a formal thing, it just happens," says Dick Beairsto, long time Grande Prairie city engineer. "Mostly we insult each other."

Sam Drader, an RCMP mem-



Meet some of the Co-Op Senators. From left to right seated around the table are Ed Coney, Wesley Hudz, John Nedohin, Jim Horrigan, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Rudy Marek.

Coney insists there's no trick to becoming a senator. "Just sit down and push yourself in."

Good-natured ribbing is as much a part of the daily half hour sessions as serious conversation.

Despite the laughter, members quickly discover they are part of a real club when they wander in as little as 10 minutes late.

The men have a distinct sense of partnership with the Co-op. All are members and many do the bulk of their shopping there.

"The Co-op has always been the place to meet neighbors and friends," says Tom Fitzpatrick, a retired farmer from the Clairmont area.

For Jim Horrigan, a retired businessman in the construction field, the meetings are a way to stay current. "We get to know what's going on around town. But it's strictly gossip."

Gwen Simpkins has been a waitress at the Co-op cafeteria for seven years. She says the senators always sit at the same table, and are without exception some of the best customers.

"They're always very friendly. They know all our names, and when there's a new girl they make her feel at home. If one of us is sick or away, they'll ask about her."

The special relationship is highlighted at Christmas when the senators' table is laid with a white tablecloth and fruit trays.

Simpkins says the staff would miss the group if the meetings suddenly ended.

"The Co-op just wouldn't be the same without them."

"It's not a formal thing, it just happens. Mostly we insult each other."

• Dick Beairsto

ber for 28 years and longtime city alderman, bears the brunt of many conversations.

"Our main objective has been to tell Sam what to do on council," says Jack Mackie, the city's first mayor.

The group meets at about 10:00 a.m. most mornings and

again at 3 p.m.

"We've been a dozen different places, but ended up at the Co-op," says Mackie, adding that no more than eight from a 'pool' of 10 manage to meet on a given morning.

The men drink coffee and play a game called 'One to One

Thousand' to see who picks up the tab that day.

They always sit at a corner table in the farthest reaches of the room because of the "good view of everybody" it offers.

The men admit they never agree on anything.

Mackie and crew know the

older senators, but the two groups remain separate. Eventually, however, they admit they may make the move to the table under the trophy counter now inhabited by the senior senators.

"Maybe, someday. If they'll let us," says Walter Bielecki with a large grin.

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