

## **WAYNE THOMAS joined the Newfoundland Club of Victoria in 2002**

### **Wayne has held the positions of “Designated Runner” (2002 - 2008), Beer and Skits Co-Chair (2007), and President (2007 – 2008)**

Wayne has been married to Frances (Fran) since 1968 and they are the proud parents of a daughter, Cindy, and a son, Mark, not to mention the proudest grandparents of Melissa, Amanda and Mackenzie.

The son of a railroader, Wayne was born in Port Blandford, NL but has lived most of his life in Grand Falls-Windsor, NL. After leaving high school, he decided that he would like to join the Canadian Armed Forces and see the world. Of course he did not realize that, by joining the infantry, it meant most of his world touring would be on foot! In any event, he applied, was accepted and came into contact with Bill Collins, who ultimately became his life-long buddy and who, in fact, introduced him to the Newfoundland Club of Victoria, too! And, because Bill enlisted with the Queens Own Rifles, then so did Wayne. Wayne served in Calgary and Victoria and deployed with the UN Forces in Cyprus or “*wherever they sent me,*” he says. The rest became military history, with a lot of great stories to be told over the years, only half of which are true we’re sure.

After 3 years in the Military, Wayne’s ever increasing, strong desire to go back home to Newfoundland took hold. And so, he headed east to pursue a career in what he was trained to do, only to discover that there were very few opportunities in Newfoundland for Infantrymen, Mortar man or Signaller! His only option then was to become a part of the “Cola War Team.” (this translates to Pepsi v. Coke, for us civilians.) “*I was uncertain as to who the winner would be, but aware that the enemy was dressed in “Red” and they became the daily target,*” he explains. “*Over the years,*” he continues, “*we overtook the enemy camp and became the leader in our market. I felt like the 5 star General, having progressed through the ranks for 35 years, eventually retiring as a Director of Field Operations in 2001. During this time, I made a lot of friends, worked for the best people that one could ever want to be associated with and had some of the greatest employees, as team members, that one could ever muster. I always believed that employees deserved to be treated with respect, if you wanted to be treated with respect yourself. We shared the good and bad times together; their success was my success; and if they failed, I failed. I will be forever grateful to all of them.*”

Since retirement, Wayne and Fran (Victoria born & bred) have traveled mostly throughout Canada and the North, having lost their desire for warmer climates. They now hang their hats for six months in Victoria and six months in Newfoundland, sharing their time with family and friends right across Canada. “*We take time to volunteer in different ways, and as time permits, on both sides of the country. Likewise, we make every effort to spend family time together with our 3 granddaughters and daughter, Cindy, who works as a Travel Consultant,*” says Wayne. “*It’s poor Cindy who gets saddled with the frustrations of our forever-changing travel plans,*” he adds. Their son Mark owns and operates a very successful neighborhood grocery store (Centennial Groceteria) in Grand Falls–Windsor, NL, with 2008 being its 40th year of operation and Mark is its 3rd owner, “*so we try to help him whenever we can, too.*”

Wayne enjoys fishing, skiing, touring and volunteering. “*The volunteering,*” he explains, “*can at times be hard work, but it can also be very rewarding. For instance, when Club members, like John and June Hollohan, take the time to express their appreciation to those who make our Club events successful (see their email below, sent to Wayne after a Club Meeting and Pub Night), I am reminded what inspires me to keep working for our Club...*”

**“What a great meeting and a wonderful Pub Night. [We] haven't stayed up so late for a long time. The atmosphere was superb, just like being at a giant kitchen party. The Eagles Club is a perfect place to hold a meeting and a great place to party afterwards. Thanks to all those who made it such a perfect evening. The Club executives who hosted an interesting meeting, the music, including the great entertainment by Hal and his “adopted daughter,” Vanessa, and those “extras” who helped fill in to give them a break. Thanks also to Tom Martin and his lovely wife for the delicious sandwiches. Even the presence of the younger generation, who, in case we've forgotten, reminded us how to party, was very refreshing. What a great family to be a part of. We look forward to the next one.”**