

# HOTEL NELSON REVISITED

## POTLUCK & SING-A-LONG

By Karen Tolman

It certainly was an eventful evening, Friday, January 29, 2010 — a potluck supper followed by singing songs from the 1997 Hotel Nelson production.

As well prepared as we were for our 6:30 pm event — the musicians, the singers, the PowerPoint master with our Library's new projector, the potluck organizers, the Moving in Step sponsors — we were not well prepared for the call we received at 5:00 pm.

"There's no heat in the Town Hall!"

"Brr," I said in response to the news. "Yikes," I then added, just to expand my vocabulary a bit!

We were scheduled to meet in the Town Hall at 5:30 pm to set up the tables, to spread wonderful India Print tablecloths on them to liven up the place a bit, and to otherwise get ready.

Tom Buttrick, who had called me, suggested that I call the Church. "Betsy Street," he said. "She'll know if the Church might be available."

"Betsy," I said, "what're you doing?"

She dropped the spoon that was stirring up her potluck, made a few phone calls, secured the Church for our use and then hurried down the hill from her house to turn up the heat.

Meanwhile, back at the pond, I frantically began telephoning others.

Snippets of conversation are still rattling around in my head, the recurring theme of which was "What time is it now?"

Miraculously, pulled together by all hands, the festivities began. At 6:30, the food arrived, carried in by many braving the cold. It was cozy and crowded and warm inside the Fellowship Hall.

When the food was gone, the songs began.

Hunt Smith made a stunning appearance in the guise of Lord Horatio Nelson, singing the song written by Gordon in 1997:

*"My name's Horatio Nelson and I sailed  
the open sea*

*I've joined the royal navy to serve my count-  
er-y*

*I found my fame and fortune, and  
immortality,*

*I hope that someday somewhere there's a  
town named after me."*

And then we sang it again — the entire song projected onto the wall — all together.

We followed with two songs by Kathy Schillemat: *Sing Halleluia* and *The Ballad of the Road Agent*, which she proclaimed isn't a ballad at all. She was right. We sang the chorus ("Yes, I had that lovely job one year..." — actual words from Hope's 1997 interview with Leonard Frazier) to a calypso beat, strummed out by Hunt on the guitar and percussed by others on a variety of gourds and things that Tom Murray had collected from his travels.

Heather Bower led us through *Hotel Nelson*, a song written by Nelson's late Josephine Creamer Dutton Murdough (see note) and set to music by Heather:

Chorus:

*"Up the hill, and there you are!*

*Hotel Nelson swings into view.*

*Drive 'round the Common, the door's always  
open!*

*Come set a spell — or two,*

*And spin your yarns,*

*There are many that'll do.*

Life is not a journey to the  
grave with intentions of  
arriving safely in a pretty  
well-preserved body, but rather  
to skid in broadside, thoroughly  
used up, totally worn out and  
loudly proclaiming ... WOW!  
What a ride!

Note: Josephine Creamer (m1: Dutton) (m2: Murdough) was born into a large family who lived off Center Pond Road. In her Nelson retirement years, she was an active member of the Nelson Artists' Coop, where she not only contributed valuable time, but watercolor paintings and many crafted items. She possessed an artistic talent inherited from her father, Ham Creamer, who carved wonderful sculptures from wood.

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