"I HAVE A DREAM"

Honourable Judges, Fellow Members, Guests …

At the closing of Convention last year, Karen Akeson, our in-coming President, said - and I quote "I HAVE A DREAM!"

When I heard those immortal words, I immediately thought of Martin Luther King, and the speech he delivered on the steps of the Lincoln memorial.

My mind then wandered to the young man who entered my life in 1961, and shared his "SPECIAL DREAM" with me. As a youth, he read, The Dangerous River, a true story of the authors' ventures to the remote South Nahanni River, in the North West Territories, and from that moment, his dream was TO LIVE IN CANADA.

As for me, I had no dreams or aspirations to leave the land of my birth! I was quite content living in the same country as ….

John …. Paul ….. George …. and Ringo - THE BEATLES!

All was idyllic in our young lives, and by 1964 our relationship had blossomed to engagement and marriage, followed two years later with the arrival of our precious first born!

By this time The Fab Four were NUMBER ONE and we'd seen them twice! Could life possibly get any better?

Another year passed, and Canada was preparing to celebrate its One Hundredth birthday! It was the year of Expo '67, and I had absolutely no idea!

I think Canada was waiting for this celebration year to beckon us to its shores!

Well …. not exactly, the truth is, in the Spring of '67 Michael was working in London, England, but we were not destined to live there as a family. As our hopes for affordable housing were dashed again, and again, we had to review our goals. Stated in current lingo - WE DEVISED A STRATEGIC PLAN.

Our first step was to study the professional journals for medical technologist postings in Canada - there were opportunities galore! Unbelievable though it may seem in today's world, we started this venture during the Easter Holidays, and on June the 24th, were on Air Canada Flight 857, Immigration Warrant 399288, enroute to Stratford, Ontario!

In just three short months, our lives had changed course, and we had bid tearful farewells to our many friends and relatives.

Oh Canada - here we come!

As an aside, I have to tell you, I was a little disturbed when the flight attendant asked - "would I like some "Lifesavers"?" until I realized they were candies!
Our guardian angel **must** have been watching over us when we chose our first apartment. Our new neighbours, the Chambers Family, took three new arrivals under their wing, and taught us "Canadian 101." They are **very special** people, and are our dearest friends to this day.

Over the past 37 years, we have had the **pleasure** of living in Stratford, Ontario, St. John's, Newfoundland and now Cambridge, Ontario, and have visited all provinces to the east. We enhanced our geographic education this past week when we visited Vancouver, and then embarked on "The Most Spectacular Train Trip in the World" for a two-day journey through the West and the Canadian Rockies. Culminating here in Calgary.

A trip of "dreams!"

In the spring of 2003, our son, Mark, decided it was time to introduce his family to the land of his parents' birth. A two-week trip was planned - so little time - so much to see and do, but with Patricia's organizational skills they visited grandparents, great-grandparents, and cousins.

They experienced train travel - **expensive**
Sightseeing: from Buckingham Palace to York - **expensive**
They discovered that $15 would buy just four cups of hot chocolate!

On their return home, Mark called me up, and said - "Mom – I could have got down on my hands and knees and kissed your feet, to thank you and Dad for moving to Canada. England was great, but Canada is the **BEST** country in the world."

Those words from our son gave Michael's "dream" so much more meaning.

A corner of my heart will always belong to England, the land of my birth. **BUT** our family belongs to Canada, and we are proud to be citizens of this great land.

From far and wide, O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

My husband's "dream" has enabled me to be here with you today, to **share** his "**DREAM COME TRUE.**"

In closing, I would ask you to take a moment - imagine your special dream, and while doing so, listen to the words of George Bernard Shaw:

You see things; and you say "Why?"

But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?"

*Janet Collins, Waterloo Region Insurance Professionals - CAIW Convention – Public Speaking Contest Calgary 2004*