

Hi, My name is Neil McCulloch and I'm a fairly new member of the Coquitlam Men's Shed (CMS). I joined around August of this year after listening to an episode of The Sunday Edition on CBC where Michael Enright interviewed Doug Mackie of the Winnipeg Men's Shed.

I immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1967. Logistically it was a very easy transition. The Bank of Montreal hired me in Glasgow to work in their BC Division and they took care of all the necessary documentation – even advanced me \$600 against a 3-year contract to pay for my plane fare and help me get settled.

But by the summer of 1969 while I was working in Castlegar, it became quite obvious that a life in banking was not for me. So I drove down to Trail and scored a job with Cominco and they sent me to work in their Pine Point operation in the Northwest Territories. For me, it was something of an epiphany. I found that I was capable of doing much more than pushing a pencil. I dug ditches, got on the end of jackhammers, helped electricians, carpenters, pipe fitters etc. and learned how to drive all kinds of trucks as well as some fairly sophisticated machinery. Every day was different and I just loved it.

But, due to a variety of circumstances, I ended up moving to Thompson, Manitoba in 1971 and, after less than three months there, managed to fall down a manway and break my back. That gave me nearly a year in hospital and left me with nerve damage, mainly in my left leg.

It didn't slow me down too much, though, but over the years the damage worsened so that for the past few years, walking has become very painful. This lack of mobility together with my natural solitary nature led to my becoming more and more isolated and as the years crept up on me it gave me cause for concern.

So, when I heard about the CMS, the whole concept of making casual acquaintance with other men and getting involved – even if only peripherally

– in some community projects really appealed to me. So I contacted the Society President, Mike Jennings, and attended my first Tuesday Breakfast at the Sunstar Restaurant on Lougheed Highway. I then showed up at their temporary project workshop – AKA Doug Gale's Shed – and helped out (I did do a bit of sanding) with the final stages of the Narwhal Tusk Project (see website for pictures and details).

<http://www.coquitlammensshed.ca/narwhal-tusk-box/>

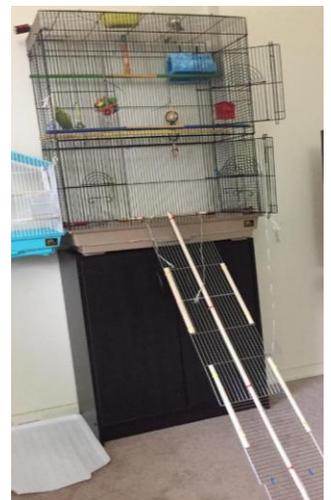
But my contact with CMS has encouraged me to explore other connections and a couple of months ago I acquired a new room mate – a 3-month old budgie I call Monty.



enjoyable.

I still find it hard to believe that this tiny little bird could have had such a huge effect on my life. Having a live, (apparently) happy individual greeting me when I come home makes coming home a lot more

He can't fly yet (the pet store clips the wings of all its birds and it takes around 6 months for them to grow back) but already his wings are noticeably longer and when he exercises them (usually from the top of his cage), you can feel the draft from

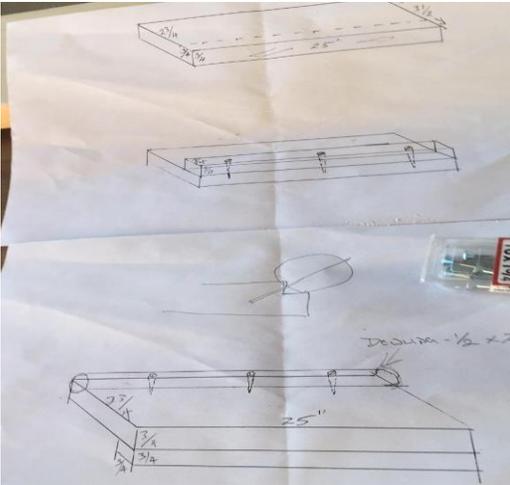


10 feet away. And now and again he flutters off of the cage (sometimes jumps; usually falls while performing some new, amazing acrobatic feat) so I built this ramp from an old gerbil cage I found in a Sally Ann thrift store. He usually does a few

circuits exploring the living room (made it into the bedroom once) then climbs up the ramp back to the safety of his cage.

Anyway, in an attempt to get him out in the front of his cage, I came up with the idea of building him a balcony. Since my carpentry skills are, at best, total rubbish, I enlisted the help of the CMS to bring it to fruition.

All you need is a detailed plan:



the assistance of a couple of highly skilled artisans:



Mike J.

Doug G.

And voila:



Just add a little paint (I did that part), attach it to the cage and, with the help of some millet to lure him out, Monty has his balcony.



Testing



Success!!!

He's already running around on the balcony and using it as an alternative route to the top and other strategic points of the cage. He tweets (real tweets, not the Trump profanity) a great big "Thank You" to his sponsors at CMS.

I have had the great pleasure of meeting some very interesting folk at the CMS meetings and I would love to hear some of their stories. Where you came from, what you do, tales of your children, your children's children, your pets, your hobbies – anything you'd like to share. I'm hoping my little missive will encourage other members to share some of it with us – perhaps make it a regular feature on the web site.

Meanwhile, let me join Monty in saying a great big "Thank You" to CMS