

Stroumbo's 5 favourite seniors of 2012 (05, 01, 13)

© by Mike Keenan

The year-end reviews have all been conducted in sports, politics, finance, entertainment, death (as in who died?) and other areas except for accomplishments by seniors. After great research, I have discovered one lonely pundit, George Stroumbouloupoulos, who thinks that we deserve some recognition on his CBC website. Here are George's favourite five seniors for 2012:

Johanna Quaas from Germany is the world's oldest gymnast at 86, still swinging on the parallel bars. She performed gymnastics as a kid, gave it up when she had a family and picked it up again in her 50's – performing in her first competition at age 56. In 2012, she appeared on TV in Britain, performing scissor twists, hand stands and a perfect dismount.

In the late sixties, McMaster offered a degree in physical education. One mandatory component was a routine performed on every piece of gymnastic apparatus plus floor exercise. Most of us were football players with no background in gymnastics where there were soon far more injuries incurred than on the gridiron. On the parallel bars, I vividly recall my thrilling mount, shoulder stand, a few other stunts and then a dazzling dismount, so Johanna has my complete respect and admiration because the parallel bars require both strength and flexibility. For me today, parallel bars are a thing of the past except when I encounter two pubs side by side.

Speaking of pubs, Arthur Reid has frequented the same pub, The Griffin, for a daily pint for 72 years since age 18 in 1940. The pub gave him his own chair.

And speaking of chairs, remember senior Clint Eastwood's non-vetted monologue with invisible Barak Obama who apparently was sitting on a chair during the Republican National Convention? During the earlier McCain run for the presidency, Republicans again displayed a habit of not vetting people. Remember the lady who could see Russia from her Alaskan porch?

With his speech, Clint Eastwood had some people wondering if he'd been to the pub with Arthur Reid (above) before he walked on stage. Eastwood was billed as a star speaker, but by the time he was done, words like weird and bizarre were being tossed around. The highlight came when Clint scolded the chair (Obama) - telling it to "shut up." And he asked the chair "what do you want me to tell Romney? I can't tell him to do that. He can't do that to himself. You're absolutely crazy."

The next senior honoured is known as the world's "poorest president" who lives on a farm and gives away most of his revenue. Jose Mujica is the president of Uruguay. He's 77, lives on a modest farm, earns \$775 a month (an average salary in Uruguay) and most money he gives away (\$12,000 a month) to poor people and small business owners. He says "I don't feel poor. Poor people are those who only work to try to keep an expensive lifestyle, and always want more and more."

Last but not least, we have China's next top model, a grandfather who models clothes for teenage girls. 72-year-old Liu Qianping has become a fashion icon. His granddaughter runs an online fashion business and Liu models clothes for her - clothes for teenage girls. It started out as a joke, but his granddaughter posted the photos online, and as with anything weird (see Clint Eastwood) they quickly went viral. Since then, her sales have taken off.

There you have it fellow seniors – five colleagues with whom you should feel proud although maybe not so much for Clint, who despite talking to chairs, has done quite well in the movie industry acting as a leading man (Bridges of Madison County) late in his career. In 2013, resolve to get out there and enjoy a pint like Arthur at your favourite pub, perform some exercise like Johanna, give your kids some needed cash like Jose, and if you are angry with your spouse, take it out on an empty chair like Clint.

