

Ron Boily with fellow pin collector, Joan Kolbauer.

Photos submitted by Ron Boily.

— Jim Parres —

Long before there was “Linsanity” (Jeremy Lin’s win streak with the New York Knicks basketball team) there was Pinsanity. In fact “Pinsanity 8” is an event that will be held in Las Vegas in September 2012 at the Hard Rock Cafe on the Strip.

What exactly is Pinsanity?

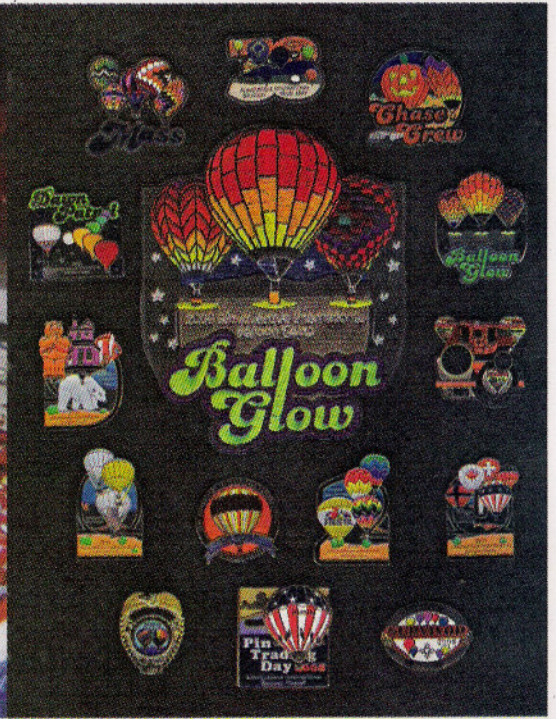
In a similar way that people band together in tribes, congregate and share their religious beliefs, organize clubs with other people of similar interests or views, participate in popular sports such as soccer, football, basketball and hockey, the human psyche seems to need to belong, to share, to have a “raison d’etre” beyond the self.

Once we have conquered Pavlov’s “Hierarchy of Needs”, human beings are of such diverse complexity and creativeness that they need to channel their extra energies into such areas as clubs, hobbies and sports. In addition, modern society seems to have more time now that we’re not constantly chopping wood, hauling water, and baking bread.

Some people collect dolls, others accumulate figurines. There are those that restore old automobiles which are added to their collection of vintage cars. Musicians tend to collect guitars or any number of other instruments. People inclined to travel the world bring home objects from other countries that personify the culture there. At this point, I’m sure you get my train of thought.



Roger Degagne with his curling pins.



2010 Vancouver Olympic Pins



Quite simply, Pinsanity is the hobby, and in some cases, the business of people who like to collect pins. Pins are generally made of a metallic substance that is fabricated into an ornamental design intended to commemorate some special event, place, or object. They have a stick pin on the back with a clasp used to attach it to your clothing. Similar to the old tie tack of yesteryear.

Let me give you a "for instance". Many Manitobans share a love of the sport of curling – hey, we've produced some world champions! We've all been down at the rink a time or two and seen curlers who flaunt vests or tams covered with colourful glittering pins commemorating a certain bonspiel held in a certain town in a certain year, etc. That is a good example of "pin collecting". People who participate in curling, collecting pins about curling.

Pinsanity, however, is much bigger than that. Pinsanity is about people who collect any kind of pin that was ever made. In other words, the more pins, the better. The rarer a pin the more it will fetch in trade or cash. Pinsanity is about power and about being the best. Of course, much of the relevance of any object is in the eye of the beholder. Even if we had the money, not everyone would pay millions for a Picasso. When I interviewed the intrepid adventurer Don Starkell for my story in the January/February 2012 issue of Cottage North, Don unfortunately was very ill and could not speak for long periods of time. Our conversations were generally only a few minutes long with the exception of one matter which bothered Don, and we spoke for almost 45 minutes on this subject. For additional information, Don referred me to his good friend, Ron Boily, of Winnipeg.



Ron and I shared a common goal to see Starkell honoured by being awarded the Order of Manitoba. To the best of my knowledge, they do not award this medal posthumously, and sadly Don Starkell passed away January 28 of this year. However, Don certainly deserved some recognition for his many and varied exploits in the world of adventure. This included publishing two books on his amazing canoe/kayak trips. "Paddle to the Amazon" and

"Paddle to the Arctic" were both best sellers and featured many interesting tales of his encounters during these trips. They're both fantastic reading.

While we were together trying to sort out that business we got to talking and it turns out that Ron Boily, besides being a professional photographer, is also the current president of the Winnipeg Pin Collectors Club. The club is based in Winnipeg but has members living throughout Canada, the U.S.A., Denmark and Germany.

Just the word "pin" conjures up many memories.

"Pin-Ups" – All of us guys have had a few, featuring shapely ladies in scanty apparel. Diamond drillers seem to me to be the most obsessed. One foreman we had on the Knife Lake campaign who worked for Midwest had a pin-up of Shania above his bed and lulled himself to sleep every night to one of her recordings.

"Pin the Tail on the Donkey" – I played this game as a kid in Flin Flon at someone's birthday party back in the 1940's. One blindfolded kid stabbed another kid's mother in the rear (she will remain anonymous). It caused quite a commotion at the time.

"Pin Your Best Girl" – (Apparently there were guys who had more than one?) This was a very old tradition whereby you gave your school pin to a girlfriend which meant you were going "steady". Another generational thing.

"Pin Cherry" – a fruit berry that grows on trees. Grandmas made them into tasty jelly.

"Pin Head" – it is a personous pins from and displays for others to see. slang term used one considered a bit of an



Ron told me turns out that gone viral, and out there in the where you can pins, but buy well. Who

many police pins, an F.B.I. pin and even a K.G.B. pin! Our Members of Parliament get a special spousal pin to give to their partner, along with their own MP pin when they are sworn in. It is made of white and yellow gold and says "House of Commons/Chambre des communes", along the green enamelled border. There is a gold mace superimposed upon a silver maple leaf. John Diefenbaker got the first pin and it is numbered #1.

The Winnipeg Pin Collectors Club was originally formed in 1987 by six pin collectors, all from Winnichuk: Bob Walpole, Denis Gregoire, Ron Kolbauer, Ron Boily, Len Peltier, and Ken Burdett. If you join you get a free pin each year depicting a Winnipeg or Manitoba landmark.

In the first year, membership totalled 22 and peaked in 1990 at 157. The club displays at various malls around the province and has hosted CBC televised events. I'm sure there are collectors throughout Manitoba and it turns out there are many clubs across Canada as well.

To join the Pinsanity, contact:

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 Website: <http://www.winnipegpincollectorsclub.com>

I think I'll check in that old box of memorabilia in the garage. I should have some "rare ones"!

in modern terms, who collects vari- all over the world them in a format (It used to be a to refer to some- by the user to be idiot!)

about his club. It pin collecting has there is a market electronic world not only trade and sell pins as knew? There are

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Winnipeg Blue Bomber Pins

