**Bob Axon**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Everybody knows that who you are is different wherever you are asked to explain “Who am I”. For example – my boys have a different definition of who I am, than my curling buddies. The cancer Society sees one side of my personality and my wife has a more realistic picture of who I am  I’m……….   * Robert Oliver Axon - Born in Leamington, raised in London, University education with a bachelor’s degree and a Master’s in Education | E:\2013 12 Probus booklet Photos\Axon, Bob.jpg |

* Married to Keri Bowman with two sons with MBA’s and 5 grandchildren
* A successful career in education
* 4 years as a truant officer/adjustment counselor
* 4 years as a high school teacher
* 3 yrs as an elementary VP and 15 yrs an elem Principal
* I love sports and still golf, curl, hike and skiing
* My major contributions
* Gold cord Queen Scout in my youth
* Steering committee organizer and Chair of Relay For Life for ten years and helped to raise 3 million Dollars for cancer support and research
* Travelled to 40 different countries
* That’s the boring stuff they write in your obituary

But here’s WHO I really AM

Bob Axon – MY Actual name at birth was Ronald Eric Holly son of Iris Holly.

* Iris Placed me in an orphanage at 9 months of age as a war baby – unwanted because of marital tension
* I was adopted by Laura and Ernie Axon in 1946 in Windsor Orphanage and raised in a supportive nurturing home
* I travelled to BC at the age of twelve under the care of two uncles and their families. A great adventure -
* On this trip I walked with guides through a mountain train tunnel 2 km long, helped catch a rattle snake
* And as a camp helper, got held down & kissed in a CGIT girls cabin by 14 older girls
* Known by many for organizing Whitewater rafting adventures in eastern Ontario
* I was a one-time nudist
* I was known as a principal that kissed animals
* As a young adult I was arrested at Checkpoint Charlie in East Berlin, Germany
* As a travelling backpacker I stayed in Tehran, Iran and in Baghdad, Iraq when times were safer
* I was the only principal in Oxford County to Bungee Jump 160 feet over a river

I successfully did a tandem parasail over a glacier in the Swiss Alps

So Who am I? As Paul Harvey would say

And here’s the rest of the story

In my career as a principal, I always believed that kids who want to come to School are better learners and happier kids generally. So I always tried to make school fun. Back when computers were first available, I raised money for new computers & improvements to my school by motivating kids to reach a dollar goal in fundraising. In order to make kids eager to help with the fundraising I agreed to kiss – lip to lip the animal that appeared the worst to smooch so I have kissed two pigs, a cow and an Iguana and raised oodles of money to buy computers.

I also was known by many as Bungee Bob

I was the organizer of 12 white water adventures to Renfrew on the Ottawa River back in the 80’s and 90’s. Each year it was a 4 day event with carnage and danger and lots of laughs. On one of these 12 trips, I was able to collect $300 from 54 local people to go as a Woodstock group – over $10,000 we paid in total. A week before we left a letter arrived addressed to me that was a thank you for my hard work getting everything organized and enclosed was a voucher for a free BUNGEE JUMP. My thought was to give it to one of kids who couldn’t afford the $60 that it cost to jump. Nope…everybody voted that I had to jump. So the second last day of the trip at 5:00 pm all 53 of the Woodstock Group headed to the edge of the Ottawa River where the 160 foot high Bungee tower was standing. Scared to death but not one to miss an adventure, I climbed 160 feet straight up and walked out on the large platform where the jumpers get weighed and the elastic rope was attached to my ankles. A loud public address system announced “Here comes Bungee Bob” and so I jumped – BACKWARDS –plummeting 160 feet head first and splashed with head and shoulder in the Ottawa R. An unforgettable experience which created the name forever of Bungee Bob.

And the parasailing over a glacier in Switzerland is true and was a Father’s Day gift from my son Steve who lived and worked in Switzerland. The word tandem means that there are two seats - one for the passenger and one for the expert parasailer who steered the kite.

Oh the best story is when we were on a cruise and the supper challenge for our table of eight was to bring back an interesting story after an excursion on shore.

At the Island of St Maarten, I discovered there was a nude beach 2 km north of the ship called Orient Beach. Four of us jumped in a cab for a tour of the north shore on the French side and for some shopping but I forgot to mention that we would be shopping beside Orient Beach. The TWO wives went shopping the two men went into the bar to sit and wait.

But I got itchy feet and started out on a MEMORABLE walk to see some nudity, spectacular views, and to add another accomplishment to my Bucket List. The beach was 1 km. long with a “lounge and beach chairs” area along the full length, about 20 miters from the water.

I left my clothes on and I headed off to the other end of this beach packed with about 800 naked men and women – some gorgeous, but mostly they were old…!

When I got to the furthest point of the beach, I hid behind a bush and stripped my clothes of and wrapped, even my sandals, into a ball. Now the thought flashed through my mind….IT’S SHOWTIME!

Nervous but eager, I walked towards the thickly occupied beach noticing the hello’s and nods from friendlier nudists, that had not happened on my first trip up the beach. But I suddenly noticed that my plan had a flaw…. My specimen of “manhood” was not even visible and had tucked in like the head of a turtle. So I took a right turn into the water to coax some enthusiasm from Mr. Johnson.

VICTORY – and the rest of my strut back to the bar was purely EPIC!

Everything after the beach walk was a blur. I got dressed, met my wife and friends, and rode in the taxi back to the Cruise Ship. At dinner, our table of 8 travel mates gathered, in “dressed up” clothes, for an elegant lobster meal – but our dinners were always preceded by stories of the best things in our day and everybody contributed. I asked to go first as we waited for the last pair, a mother and daughter, to arrive. I KNEW my story would be raucous!

To my surprise, the mother, daughter pair seemed anxious and pleaded to go first ahead of me. Whoops – this seemed disappointing!

Glancing at each other they described a rather boring day of shopping in French shops and searching for emeralds and a watch. Then Mom said that she suggested that they go visit ORIENT BEACH but they found it boring until…….

ALONG CAME BOB – TOTALLY NAKED – AND HIS CLOTHES WERE WRAPPED UP UNDER HIS ARM. The shock of their story and my downfall from “stud status” has never left my sensitive memory.

My last Who Am I story was actually the start of my lifelong story and explains why I have two names. In 1945 the war was ending and soldiers were returning home to a changed world and a happy heroes’ welcome. In this excitement I was conceived but I was an unwelcome pregnancy for my Mom, whose husband George was still overseas. Abortion was not an option for women back then, THANK GOD, and George was very angry when he found out that I was there to greet him. My name was officially given as RONALD ERIC HOLLY and most of my relatives embraced me as the new bubbly baby. At nine months of age George wanted me gone - or he was leaving so my mom wrapped me up in a blue blanket and walked into Windsor Children’s orphanage and said good bye. I was adopted one month later by the Axon family and would NOT be here today, if they had chosen someone else to be their child. So the other pieces of my life fit together after my new name was paid for by my Dad for $5.

I grew up in London, got married to Keri, became a teacher, had kids, but the interesting part about being adopted is that you get the yearning to find your genetic roots. So I started a search for the Holly family and found my Mom, retired with her husband George. It was a warm friendly reunion at their home in Florida. I learned that I had three brothers and a ton of new relatives.

So when Phil asked me to say a few words about Who Am I – I realized that my life so far has been a winding series of good luck adventures that have carved some wrinkles and put some white hair on my aging face.

THAT’S WHO I AM