



# WEEKLY UPDATE



## Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: Ted Koziel

RI President: Sakuji Tanaka

Week January 30, 2013

Board 2012 - 2013

*President: Hugh Williams, Secretary: Ron Miller, Treasurer: Don Edwards*

***Speaker: February 06, 2013 - Club Meeting & D,G Ted Koziel***

### Today's Speaker - Andre Dugas Classification Talk



President Hugh introduced Andre saying that since Andre and Gill joined the Club, he has been "thrilled" with the work they have done for the Club.

Andre was born in Ottawa and resided in the Civic Hospital area. He attended Saint Francois d'Assise Primary School, Fisher Park High School and Ottawa University. He joined the Department of External Affairs (now Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) and served abroad in Geneva

(Switzerland), New York (USA), Brussels (Belgium), Abidjan (Ivory Coast) (twice), London (UK), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), New Delhi (India) and Manila (Philippines). Andre held the rank of First Secretary, Head of Chancery, Counsellor, Consul General, Deputy Ambassador and Charge. He served in Ottawa as Deputy Director General of The Consular Affairs Bureau. He retired in 2006 and Gill and he now live in Etobicoke where they are now proud Rotarians with the Rotary Club of Etobicoke since 2011. They previously joined in several Rotary and Kiwanis projects while overseas. Gill has held several officer positions in clubs and groups which encouraged them to seek out The Rotary Club of Etobicoke, especially because of their Ribfest fundraising, upon their return to Canada. Their only daughter, Samantha, also lives in Etobicoke with our only grandchild Lincoln.

Today, Andre wanted to give an idea of what the life of a diplomat entails. He said many people think that the life of a diplomat is cocktail parties and dinners. While there is some of that, it is a very small part of what the job entails.

He said he will concentrate on the Consular aspect as this affects all Canadians living or travelling abroad. In each Canadian mission abroad, the head of the Consular program is the Consul and his/her assistant the Vice-Consul. The Canadian government, through its representatives abroad (Consuls and Vice Consuls) represents Canadians who encounter difficulties while travelling or residing abroad. What can be done for them? First of all, it is important to note that Canadians abroad are subject to the laws of the country where they are traveling or residing no matter what the equivalent law may be in Canada. For

# WEEKLY UPDATE

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example, a small quantity of cannabis may be subject to a fine in Canada but could be a death sentence in another country. Singapore and Malaysia apply the death penalty stringently to foreign travellers and their own citizens. He experienced this personally, when on assignment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where 2 Australian citizens were hung for possession of 5 grams of marijuana (not heroin or another hard drug) for personal use which in Australia or Canada would have been a minor offence. His Australian counterpart (a close personal friend and very experienced consul), was so disturbed by what he had to go through over a period of several months that he resigned from the Foreign Service when he returned home. So being aware of local laws and ensuring you are complicit with them is crucial when travelling/residing abroad. Foreign Affairs have a web site with consular information for every country where we have a presence which you should consult before travelling.

Andre went on to try and define the circumstances where assistance can be provided and where it cannot. For example, you have a dispute with the bill at the hotel where you are staying and you refuse to pay. This is a civil matter. The embassy can provide you with a list of local lawyers to represent you. However, they cannot intervene in a civil matter. In some instances, they may appear in court as an observer where there is proof that there is a bias towards you in the legal system. This does not mean that they can intervene but their presence is a reminder to the court that they are there to ensure you are treated fairly and equitably under the local laws.

You are probably asking yourselves by now, when can you obtain assistance from the Embassy? Andre gave two concrete examples (He said he could give many others but time constraints did not allow him to do so). During a catastrophe, the Canadian government through its embassies provides succour to its citizens. One example, in which Andre participated, was the Tsunami in 2005 in Thailand. Immediately after the tsunami, He was requested to go to the island of Phuket in Thailand from Manila (where he was stationed) to assist identifying, finding and assisting

Canadians affected by the tsunami. The Canadian Embassy in Bangkok coordinated the effort and they had a temporary office (along with those of many other countries) in the Governor's office in Phuket. They spent several weeks searching records of visiting/residing Canadians, tracking them down, communicating with Ottawa and their family/friends, assisting in the repatriation of Canadians back to Canada, assisting and visiting injured Canadians, repatriating them when it was possible to move them and identifying deceased Canadians. This, as you can imagine, was the most difficult part. Canada had sent a forensic team from Ontario with the RCMP to identify deceased Canadians. The tsunami was not kind to bodies and, of course, these deteriorated rapidly in the tropical climate. Of over 400 Canadians identified as having been in Thailand, they were able to finally determine that 24 had lost their lives in the tsunami. As sad as this is, comparatively speaking, this compares favourably with the Norwegians who had 20,000 of their citizens visiting/residing in Thailand of which several thousand perished. Another example, again, one which he experienced directly, is the case of a man-made disaster. He is speaking of the civil war which broke out in the Ivory Coast in 1999 and intensified in 2000. He was Consul there, as well as accredited to Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Benin. He didn't want to go into details (otherwise he said we will be here all day), except to say that conditions were so bad that they had to evacuate their families at one point (Gillian was to remain in Toronto with their daughter for six months until the situation became stable enough to allow her to return along with all of their other dependents). As consul, not only was he responsible for over 1500 Canadians residing in the Ivory Coast, but also the ones living in Liberia, Burkina Faso and Benin. In addition, they had a consular agreement with the Australians where they represented their citizens where they have no missions and vice versa. So, he was, also responsible for 50 Australian citizens living in the Ivory Coast. These were mainly missionaries operating a school near the city of Man in the west of Ivory Coast next to Liberia. The Ivory Coast was split in two: the rebels

# WEEKLY UPDATE

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holding the northern part (which was mainly Muslim) and the government holding the southern part (which was mainly Christian and animist) along with the commercial capital, Abidjan. Atrocities, on both sides, were being committed, with mosques being burned and Muslims massacred in the north and churches burned and Christians being massacred in the south. Fortunately, the French had a division of marines (43<sup>rd</sup> BIMA) permanently based in Abidjan and were instrumental in keeping both sides apart (as much as possible) and to protect French citizens (over 24,000 resident in the Ivory Coast) along with foreign embassies and their citizens. However, the situation in the west was particularly bad as both sides were using mercenaries from Liberia to attack each other's supporters which put foreigners (French, Canadian, Australian and other foreign citizens) in a precarious position. Andre, therefore, organized the evacuation of Canadian and Australian citizens located near Man with the collaboration of the French military. This was not easy as he had to organize transportation for about 150 persons (men, women and mostly children). Unfortunately, in every crisis, there are those who would take advantage. He had to hire 4 buses and you can imagine that most companies saw them as "the goose that laid the golden eggs". They were demanding the equivalent of \$10,000 where normally the cost would have been \$400 to \$500. However, through negotiations and calling in favours, he was able to obtain the buses for about \$900. The other difficult part was to make arrangements to coordinate a meet with the column of the French military at a specific location at a specific time where the French military would then escort them to Abidjan. This had to be accomplished in a way that would not put them in jeopardy with the opposing forces. Andre was able to do this through their warden system (they had designated certain Canadians in every part of the country and the capital as wardens, provided them with two-way radios (Motorolas) and kept in touch with them continuously to obtain and provide information) by contacting our warden in Man (a Canadian nun and her sisters) who, in turn, contacted the missionary

school and arranged the meet. Once, this was done, they were escorted to Abidjan where Andre met them, accommodated them in hotels and arranged transportation to Canada and Australia. Of, course, it was much more complicated than this synopsis but he is pleased to report that they all arrived safely. In summary, Andre hopes that this has provided a flavour of the difficulties life as a diplomat can present. It is safe to argue that while some may consider working in Ribfest as demanding and stressful, it does not compare to diplomatic life and stress caused by living in foreign cultures and dealing with experiences that are often unpredictable with far ranging consequences. Andre thanked everyone for listening and then entertained a few questions.

Michael Bell thanked Andre for his very interesting look at what the life of a diplomat entails. Michael noted that in Andre's talk he dealt with the "parties" for only a brief moment then went on to talk about the "really tough stuff" of being a diplomat. Michael also wanted to thank Andre and "his bride" Gillian for choosing to join our Rotary Club and hoped they will continue to be members "for a long, long time".

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## RI President Sakuji Tanaka's visit to the Rotary Club of Toronto

Rotary Club of Toronto President Neil Phillips is inviting all Rotarians and any interested guests to meet Rotary International President Sakuji Tanaka at a special luncheon on Friday, March 1, 2013 (12 PM) at the Fairmont Royal York (Concert Hall), 100 Front Street West, Toronto. Tickets are \$80 each. Tickets are going fast. If you are interested, contact;

[http://rtc-resourcecenter.com/event//index.asp?Event\\_Id=44](http://rtc-resourcecenter.com/event//index.asp?Event_Id=44).

If the hyper-link does not work, cut and paste into your browser.

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# WEEKLY UPDATE

## Tania Fernandos - Rexdale Community Health Centre

President Hugh asked Tania to give a quick overview of what the Rexdale Community Health Centre was all about. Tania noted that the RCHC is in North Etobicoke at Rexdale and Kipling. They support and advocate for the physical, economic, social and mental well being of its diverse community through primary health care, community social support, health promotion, collaborations and partnership, community development and social action. The primary health care includes medical care with doctors on site, chiropody, dental services, diabetes management, etc. They also have numerous health promotion programs that look into the "root causes" of health problems in the area. Tania is involved in these programs. She noted that North Etobicoke has a high occurrence of Type-2 diabetes. They are trying to design programs of healthy eating and exercise to try and lessen these occurrences. She is also looking at what effects of cost of food versus healthy eating have on the community. What the relationship is between "food insecurity and food access". What are the "barriers especially for youth" to eat healthy. She is working to design "strategic plans" to help solve these problems. She is working closely with several community gardens where up to 50 families grow their own food. They are also doing an "environmental scan" to see what the "gaps" are in the service and "where they can effectively use their resources".

## Visitors & Guests

### Visiting Rotarians

- ➔ **Suzanne Rusywich** – Rotary Club of Parkdale-High Park

### Guests

- ➔ **Lilian Arrage** – Exchange Student
- ➔ **Tania Fernandos** – Guest of Hugh Williams
- ➔ **Florian Hammerbacher** – Potential New Member
- ➔ **Jack Fleming** – Former member who is rejoining the Club
- ➔ **Erlene Brown** – Potential New member

Club members – we were **10** today

Total attendees - **16**

## Birthdays This Week



*Stan Long - February 01*

*Ken Coates - February 02*

*Theresa Sherwood - February 03*

## Secretary's Corner

*By Ron Miller*

*Following announcements were made*

- **March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013** - Night of 1000 Cocktail-sticks Magoanine Fundraiser - Nigel and Bernadette's - Further details to come.
- **May 04, 2013** - District Assembly, BMO Institute.

*Please put all these dates in your diaries and let Ron know any make-ups/meetings you have attended - THANK YOU!*



# WEEKLY UPDATE



**Michael Bell** – Michael was happy to say that the Trillium Mississauga Hospital is a “first rate” facility that he has got to know quite well over the past week. Michael’s daughter was rushed to Trillium on Saturday in a “diabetic coma” and was in ICU there. Michael said that they treated her “fabulously” and that she was released on Monday and is now home. She is being treated by the Hospital’s Diabetic Clinic to straighten things out. Michael said he is thankful that they have “such a good facility that is there when you need them”. Michael said he was also at Trillium last week when his Mom fell and broke her leg. She is now at the Trillium Queensway recuperating.

**Lynda Ryder** – Lynda was happy to say that she was in to visit Bob Maxwell at the Etobicoke General. She said that Bob fell at home and needed some stitches in his leg. She said that while he was there they “zapped” him to correct an irregular heartbeat. She said is doing fine and hopefully he will be home later today.

**Jack Fleming** – Jack was happy to say that he has gotten to know Service Ontario well over the past couple weeks as he trying to “migrate back into the system”. He has his OHIP application in and has new licence plates on his car as of today. He had to make 5 visits to Service Ontario to get “every piece of paper they need”. His wife was laughing about the experience saying “it was beyond belief”.

**Florian Hammerbacher** – Florian was happy to say that last week he “did some awesome” things in the city and wanted to mention a couple of them. Florian and his wife attended the opening of the “Human Rights Human Wrongs” exhibition at the “magnificent” Ryerson Image Centre which he calls “a world class facility”. They also attended the opening of the Canadian Opera Company’s “Tristan und Isolde” which he said “blew him away”. He said it was a great production of the Wagner classic. He added that it is very exciting to live in a city like Toronto that offers some much in the way of cultural diversity. It makes him “very happy” to live here.



## 50/50 Draw

Today’s 50:50 Draw **Hugh Williams** ticket was drawn out of the bag and he pulled the **8 of Spades**.

## Scarborough Twilight Rotary Club Annual Valentine’s Day Social Fundraiser

The Scarborough Twilight Rotary Club is holding its Annual Valentine Day Social Fundraiser

Date: Friday, February 15, 2013 @ 7:00 PM

Location: Highland Yacht Club House, 5 Brimley Road, Scarborough, ON

Tickets: \$25/each

Detail: The Scarborough Twilight Rotary Club Annual Valentine’s Dinner and Fundraising for Paul Harris Student Scholarships.

Dance, Door Prizes, Karaoke  
(Free Parking at the Club).

Cash Bar: Beer & Wine

Dress Code: Business Casual Buffet

Tickets available from STRC Members  
or Dale Maynes at 416 284 3603

*Reporting & Pictures Courtesy: Ron Miller*