



WEEKLY UPDATE



Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: Ted Koziel

RI President: Sakuji Tanaka

Week May 29, 2013

Board 2012 - 2013

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

Speaker: June 05, 2013 - Chuck Taylor Rotary Club of Uxbridge Malawi Pilot Project to Eliminate Transfer of HIV

Today's Speakers - Liberia School Project Cy Garland & Marvin Dahn



President Hugh noted that “many years ago” he became part of the International Committee and said there was “a lot going on” and that it was a “wonderful committee to be on. He said he will never forget that one of the “key players” in the committee was Cy Garland. Cy had did a “lot of travelling” around the world and had seen “a lot of things that needed to be fixed” in many of these countries. This was one of the reasons that Cy became actively involved in the International Committee. Hugh said that he had also travelled extensively “with his work” and had gone to many of the places such as Sierra Leone, Yemen, Kosovo, Afghanistan, among others where he had also

seen these “needs”. Hugh said that when while things in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in the world, were bad, Liberia which is right next door “was even worse”. He said that Cy and Marvin were here today to talk about a project in Liberia that the Club help start back 3 or 4 years ago. Hugh says this is “one place we have been able to make a difference”.

Cy said that it was a pleasure “to be back” and he said that Hugh was correct in saying that he had “a passion for the International Committee and for Rotary”. Cy noted that as you get older you develop bad memory. He is not sure if “he has bad memory because he can’t remember what good memory was”.

Cy said that Marvin Dahn is from Liberia. Liberia is on the “south coast” of West Africa between Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire. Liberia suffered the “worst” civil war which Cy said was a “massacre” in which ½ million people died. There were “child armies” of 13 year olds that “killed everything in their path”; in one of the poorest countries in Africa. Marvin left the country at the start of the civil war but never forgot his country and the village he came from and he wanted to help. Cy met Marvin at the Church they attend here. Marvin went to the church to get food stuff, etc to be shipped to Liberia in barrels. Marvin worked in law enforcement in Liberia and knew there would be “problems getting the supplies to where it was intended”. He knew the right people to contact there that would protect the shipments until they get to the village. In general he says the people who would try to intercept these supplies there “are not bad people, just hungry”. Rotary stepped up and gave \$5,000. Marvin went on to build a school

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in his former village. The school is now up and “hundreds of kids line up every day to go to that school”. Cy noted that when he was on the International Committee, they never got “feedback on their projects. Was the money going to where it was supposed to go and being used for what it was supposed to do?” The school is “mud brick” with 10 classrooms, a dirt floor, no blackboards, no electricity and no water. They need desks, blackboards, teaching aids, a cement floor, a latrine, and a well. The old government of Charles Taylor has gone and he has been “put away for life” for war crimes. The new government is trying to do better things. Currently the school has “volunteer teachers” but if the school “come up to standards” the government will supply teachers. Regardless the school is still “a place to learn”. Cy now wanted to introduce Marvin by saying “his English may not be perfect, but his heart is”.

Marvin began by saying that his full name is Marvin Voker Dahn. Dahn refers to his tribe. The tribe name is “Dann” and his name is “Dahn”, or meaning from the “Dann tribe”. Marvin was a former Liberian national police CID before coming to Canada in 1994. He is now a Canadian and is employed by the City of Toronto as a corporate security officer. He is married with 3 kids and has been living in Mississauga for 18 years. He was in Liberia at the early stages of the war. One day he went to work but could not return home as the way was “cut off”. He spent the next 3 months living with a Lebanese man who was a friend and kind enough to take him in. All that time he could see “smoke in the direction of his village”. The “gentleman” he was staying with made it possible for him to go to Canada and virtually “smuggled him on to the plane at night” to leave the country. When he landed at Mirabel Airport in Montreal it was January. All he had was one small “handbag” and wasn’t dressed for the cold weather (in Liberia in January it is warm). An official at the airport saw the way he was dressed and took off his “trench coat” and gave it to Marvin saying “he would need it”. When he tried to get this person’s name all he said was “welcome to Canada”. Marvin said that he has been lucky

that he has had from many other people along the way. He had been in Canada about 3 months when he got a call from his wife, who was still in Liberia, saying that their Lebanese friend had arranged for her and her 2 boys to join Marvin in Canada. He is grateful that he has a job with the City of Toronto which he says pays a “reasonable amount of money” and that Canada is “one of the best countries in the world to live”. However, he still remembers “where he comes from and the problems they still face” and he wants to continue to help. He still hears “bad stories” of the problems they face day to day. Marvin met Cy at the church they attend in Mississauga. When he went to talk to the Church about his idea of sending food and medical supplies to his village, the Church came to his aid. However they didn’t have the Money to ship them. The village is 170 miles from the capital Monrovia and access is only by “rugged roads”. There is not water or electricity in the village. Marvin took it on himself to get some supplies to the village. His parents still live there and their home became the “gathering point” for the village. He went to visit his village after all these years and was said he treated like a “rock star” but he wanted to do more. No one was “looking after the health and education of the village. When he came back he went to Cy to see if he could help. He was looking for \$5,000 to help the people. There was no school for all the kids here. He needed the \$5,000 to “build a school”. He knew that this would be a “trust issue” since it was a “lot of money” in a “very poor region”. For example, when they were building the school, people worked from dawn to dusk for \$1/day and had others lining up to do the work. This was considered a “high wage”.

To make sure things went smoothly; Marvin went there to get things going. An agreement in principal was made to build the school but knew they needed accountability. Since he was formerly in law enforcement there he knew the people to contact in the Police Department that would ensure the project would be “overseen” properly and got a “letter of co-operation” with them. He then got the town chief, the elders, the “young folks”, the contractors all involved in the project. The

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money was only “apportioned” as needed with “strict controls. After the school was finished Marvin said he went back and he “literally cried” when he saw it. He said he danced, took pictures and was again treated like a “super star”. However, he wants to make the school better than it is. A lot of kids want to go to the school. He would like to see the school get a well and a latrine. He went to Monrovia and talked with the Deputy Minister of Education. While sympathetic, he showed Marvin the education budget. The Liberian government is keen on helping education, but they are focusing on the “urban” areas of the country. They didn’t have the money to help the “rural villages”. Marvin noted that, as many people know, “governments in Africa are notoriously corrupt” and if you know the right people you “can get things done”. He got an agreement that if they could bring the school “up to standards” the government would help out by sending teachers.

Marvin thanked the Club for letting him speak and hopes that we might consider helping again in some way. Michael Bell mentioned to Marvin that instead of a well that needs “maintenance” that they might explore the idea of similar “cisterns” as the one’s that the Club supported for the “Rift Valley” project. Michael said that he would talk further with Marvin about them.

Frederik Martin thanked Cy and Marvin for their presentation.

The Training Renewal Foundation Certificate of Appreciation

The Club has received a “Certificate of Appreciation” from The Training Renewal Foundation in recognition of our donation of \$1,500 that was used to support 5 students to achieve their Grade 12 equivalency certificates.



Visitors & Guests

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- **Marvin Dahn** - Speaker
- **Lynn Manwar** - Potential New Member
- **Liz Reid** - Potential New Member
- **Tamila Karpyk** - Tamila has been involved in the development of Rotaract and Rotary activities in the Ukraine since 1995. She was President of the Rotaract Club of Ternopil (1997-98) and a member of the Rotaract Committee of RI Board of Directors (1999-2000). She is now living here and was here today to learn more about Rotary activities in this area.

Members Birthdays

- **Carlos Petosa** - June 01

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Secretary's Corner

By Ron Miller

The following announcements were made:

Monday, June 3rd - Board of Directors Meeting - 6 PM - President Hugh's home, 17 Dominion Road, Toronto (2 blocks south of Lake Shore Blvd. W. at Long Branch Avenue)- This will be a "Joint" meeting of the "outgoing" and "incoming" Boards.

Rotary Club of Newmarket - 18th Annual Golf Fundraiser

The Rotary Club of Newmarket will be hosting its 18th Annual Golf Fundraiser at RedCrest Golf

Club (www.cardinalgolfclub.com/golf/redcrest) on Thursday, June 20, 2013. The cost is \$180 per player or \$720.00 for a foursome and includes the following: 18 holes at Red Crest; Power cart with GPS; Lunch and Dinner at the Bistro at RedCrest; Silent & Live Auction; and all tournament contests and drive up service for unloading clubs. Rotary has exclusive use of the RedCrest clubhouse for that day. Online registration is available at;

www.golfemsreg.com/events/18th_annual_newmarket_rotary_golf_tournament

Registration is 10:30 am; 11:30 am BBQ Lunch; 1:30 pm Shotgun Start; 6:00 pm Hip of Beef Buffet Dinner, Silent & Live Auction, Prizes. For further information contact; Anitra Basant Sisavang at mailservice@clubrunner.ca

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



50/50 Draw

Florian Hammerbacher, this week's lucky ticket holder - 3 of Hearts.

HAPPY BUCKS



Theresa Sherwood – Theresa was happy to say that the "Hands on Etobicoke" committee prepared 50 meals at Youth without Shelter last Wednesday. Theresa says that Maati, their "fearless" chef was in his glory. They prepared tacos, pasta, etc and Gill backed cookies. The youths there were "overjoyed" with the food and she added that "one fellow kept coming back again and again". They also took cookies and sandwiches to the Light Patrol which has a bus that travels through the city giving out food and supplies to the homeless. They also help out with "their meds".

Michael Bell – Michael was happy that he had just received his "Hands on Etobicoke t-shirt from Theresa. He was also happy to say that "one month from today will be the start of Ribfest". He says plans are "coming together very well". Michael added that Justin, Diane and he have had 2 meetings with 22 Division regarding the police presence at Ribfest. Michael said they "are onboard" with the suggested revisions to decrease the number of officers at "non-busy" times. Michael wanted to remind members that we "need all the help we can get" for things to "run smoothly".

Hugh Williams – Hugh was happy to say that he met Liz Reid in the parking lot on the way into today's meeting and she informed him that she "is on for 4 days at Ribfest".