



THE BULLETIN



Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: **Valarie Wafer**

RI President: **Ron D. Burton**

Week October 23, 2013

Board 2013-2014

President: Michael Bell, Secretary: Ron Miller, Treasurer: Don Edwards

October 30, 2013 Speaker – York University Rotaract Club: Their Experience at RYLA and Discovery Camp

Reporting: Ron Miller Pictures: Ron Miller & Peter Dusek

Today's Speaker Gem Munro Amarok Society



Gillian Dugas introduced Gem.

Gem has devoted his life and career to improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged people across Canada and abroad. Pursuit of this objective carried him into residence in unfortunate communities across most of Canada before carrying him overseas. He is presently a Director of Amarok Society, a registered Canadian charity that provides education programmes to the very poor in Bangladesh. As well, Gem is an author and artist whose current book is a bestselling collection of stories about some extraordinary people he's come to know in the slums of Bangladesh. For their work, Gem and his wife, Dr. Tanyss Munro, have recently

been named recipients of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medals.

Gem began by saying it was a pleasure being here today and that he remembers speaking to our Club 2 to 3 years ago.

Along with his wife Tanyss they are trying to bring improvements to the worst school systems in the world. Bangladesh is "at the bottom of the list of countries you don't want to be on and is at the bottom of the list of countries you want to be on". To do this Gem, Tanyss and their four children moved to the city "ranked the worst in the world Dhaka, Bangladesh. Anyone who has seen Dhaka would not dispute the "worst city" ranking.

Millions of children in the slums are too poor to go to school and no one was doing anything about it. Many thought that they were "fools" to go there and try to change things. Many doubted they would have "any appreciable impact". They need to change the "conventional way" of building schools, hiring teachers and bringing in the students. These approaches were not working for these children. A new approach was needed. They "harness the power of mothers to effect lasting improvements in some of the poorest slums in the world".

Their idea was to teach the mothers who will in turn teach the children. Many other organizations told them this was a "futile" venture as they said the mothers "couldn't learn enough to teach". There was also danger from the slum lords, the corrupt police (gem says Bangladesh is the most corrupt country in the world), and the husbands who were less than supportive of women being educated.

Gem said the last time he talked to our Club he spoke about what they were doing. Today he wants

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to talk about what the mothers are doing. Poor mothers are being taught how to read and write in their local language, they are learning English (necessary for economic advancement) and math. They also teach them life skills such as health, nutrition, child care, and conflict resolution. The mothers, many of whom have never before even held a pencil, attend school every day for 2 hours. In turn they go home and teach 5 children. Gem says this is changing the dynamic in the slums.

Typically in the slums young girls as young as 11-12 are married, move to their husband's home with all of his family and becomes a "slave" in her husband's home. She is expected to do all the work. Then there is the "dowry system". The girl's family pays the husband's family to have her become a slave. The reason the girls are so young is that the "older the girl, the higher the dowry" which many families cannot afford. These young girls are now also expected to have babies and this is much too early for many of them. "Babies produce bad babies" is more than the rule here. Bangladesh is one of the few countries in the world where IQ's are falling.

Now that more and more mothers are beginning to be educated "circumstances are being enhanced". Why teach mothers? If you teach a child, you teach a child. If you teach a father, he uses his new knowledge to gain a livelihood outside the home. But if you teach a mother, you teach a family. It is well-known that the educational attainment of a mother has a direct correlation to the educational attainment of her child, for several reasons: a mother will apply her knowledge directly to the benefit of her family; when you teach a mother, a culture of education is created in the household; educating mothers has the most immediate effect on bringing the birth rate under control; educating a mother elevates her position within the household and establishes in the upcoming generation the value of teaching females and an assumption of gender equality; it most effectively introduces health information into the family; mothers educated by a compassionate organization will act to moderate potential extremism in their children. The mothers teach both the girls and boys in the family. There are great expectations that through the mothers

teaching the boys will have a much different view of women than their fathers have traditionally held. It is also changing the cultural dynamic. All the mothers being educated by Amarok have started a "strike" against the antiquated dowry system. This is dangerous as many of the extremists there hate education. They rely on ignorance. Their path through meaningful life requires "hating you". "Much like Polio is a scourge on the body, Ignorance is a terrible scourge on the mind". Gem says we "must reach around the people who divide". Gem noted that Amarok's philosophy is "peace will come through education" which he says is very similar to Rotary's "Peace through Service". He added that one of Rotary's strengths is the idea that through education "a peaceful world is possible".

Andre Dugas thanked Gem.

Speaker – Bruce Kruger



Jack Fleming introduced Bruce.

Bruce is a retired Ontario Provincial Police Officer who is now living in Bracebridge and is a member of the Bracebridge - Muskoka Lakes Rotary Club. His last rank with the OPP was Detective Inspector with the Criminal Investigation Bureau. Bruce joined the OPP in 1970 and retired December 31, 1999 and had various jobs with the Force from Highway Patrol to Platoon Supervisor to Criminal Investigation. He currently owns and operates Kruger's Muskoka River

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B&B in Bracebridge and is the franchisee for two local Swiss Chalet/Harvey's outlets. Jack noted that if he listed all of Bruce's awards "we would be here all day" but said they include the "Canada medal for Bravery", "Police Exemplary Service Medal", "Ontario Medal for Police Bravery", and the "Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal". Bruce is also a "Paul Harris Fellow". Many will remember Bruce as our "Town Crier" at this year's Citizenship Ceremony at Ribfest.

Bruce said he is currently the Town Crier for the City of Bracebridge and is Past President of the Ontario Guild of Town Criers. He recently placed 3rd in World Town Criers competition and won the North American completion in 2003.

Most of the time, the retired OPP Officer appears to be enjoying retirement, but in fact it is "a mask". Bruce suffers from Post Traumatic stress Disorder (PTSD). Bruce said while he has investigated a great deal of crime in his career, this is a "different type of crime". He suffers from anxiety, depression, guilt and periods of rage. Bruce says that "first responders" are some of the most susceptible to PTSD. In some it is one traumatic incident that triggers PTSD and with others it is a series of events.

Bruce described some of the things he thinks led to his "personal hell" and continues to haunt him to this day.

- He was forced to shoot and kill an escaped convict who was about to shoot a "rookie" with a double barrelled sawed-off shotgun
- Persons from a drug investigation he was conducting set fire to his boat
- He recovered the bodies of a small child and his father, known to his family, who were drowning victims
- He found the body of a fellow officer shot to death with three bullets in his head and tossed in a snow bank
- An escaping "pepping tom" trapped him on his car door while attempting to arrest him and was thrown to the ground. He was off duty for a year and had five operations.

Bruce said there were various other incidents too numerous to mention, but considered them to be

"normal" tasks of a police officer. Slowly and "in a very insidious way", Bruce says he developed all the major signs and symptoms of PTSD including severe depression, alcohol abuse, horrendous nightmares, relationship problems, night sweats and extreme anger. He finally was order to attend anger management. Unfortunately no one referred his file to mental health professionals such as a Force psychologist or psychiatrist who would have likely recognized the symptoms of PTSD. He added that his Anger Management course "just made him angrier".

Bruce wanted to mention why he was seated at today's luncheon with his back right against the wall. It is one of his PTSD symptoms that he deals with daily. He says he feels he has to do this so that "no one can attack him from behind". This has caused him to "flee airplanes, cry in restaurants, and rearrange furniture in friends' homes – all for the perfect seat".

Bruce says that PTSD is the "loneliest injury in policing". When he received "little to no assistance from the OPP", he turned to the Canadian Armed Forces Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program at CFB Trenton and CFB Petawawa. Within 24 hours of asking for help there, he was contact personally by an Armed Forces psychiatrist who guided his own doctor to the PTSD program at Howewood Health Centre in Guelph. Bruce added that the Ombudsman of Ontario is undertaking an investigation, and hopefully will conduct a full investigation into the "disgraceful" manner that the Ontario Government, police leadership, and various organizations including the OPP have "failed miserably" to address this mental health issue amongst police officers in Ontario. Bruce wanted to stress that "he is a proud to have been a member of the OPP just as his father was for 34 years". His son is also in the OPP. He believes changes are coming and will be "worth every penny they cost". PTSD was at one time considered a "weakness" in the officer. Now the attitude within police leadership is changing. PTSD is being recognized now by police and military organizations all over the world. Bruce mentioned the mental health/PTSD programs that have been helping police and soldiers there. The

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International Committee of his Bracebridge – Muskoka Lakes Rotary Club has been helping this organization.

President Michael thanked Bruce and presented him with a cheque for the Bracebridge – Muskoka Lakes Rotary Club which Bruce says will likely be used to help the Ugandan Police & Soldier mental health/PTSD program.

badge, and their New Member Information package. President Michael presented them with their Rotary pins.

Cheque Presentation – David Lockett – PACT:

President Michael presented David Lockett from PACT with a cheque for \$10,000 in support of their Urban Garden project. PACT will be building urban gardens at several high schools in the area.

Birthdays This Week



Alex Woda – October 21

Sue Foley – Oct 26

Happy Birthday to on your happy day... ..

New Member Introduction



President Michael was very pleased to induct our 3 new members, Martina Ernst, Yvan Baker and Peter Dusek into the Club. Ron Miller presented them with their Rotary membership cards, their Club ID

Visitors & Guests



Visiting Rotarian

- **Bruce Kruger** – Rotary Club of Bracebridge-Muskoka Lakes – speaker
- **Alice Otupiri** – Rotary club of Nepean-Kanata

Guests

- **Gem Munro – Amarak Society – speaker**
- **David Lockett – PACT**
- **Rhena Fleming – Guest of Jack Fleming**
- **Pina Martino – Guest of Ralph Chiodo and potential new member**
- **Kirk Entwisle – Potential new member**
- **Keith Theodore – Potential new member**

Attendance:

Members –22
Guests –08
Total – 30

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50/50 Draw

We have winner here today - Don Edwards - "The Joker". Don's winning \$300+ - Well done Don.....



HAPPY BUCKS

Ralph Chiedo –Ralph was happy to say that he had Pina Martino as his guest today and that "if we all behave ourselves she may consider becoming a member". Ralph was also happy and very honoured to say that the Rotary Club of Reventino (District 2100) in Southern Italy had decided to present Ralph with an award, the "Filippo Laurussa" Arts and Professions Award for 2013. The Reventino Club covers about a half dozen towns in Southern Italy including the town where Ralph was born. The award is designed to "identify a personality native and/or operating in the territory of the Rotary Club of Reventino, which is distinct by putting at the service of the community the cultural and social values of historical character: humanistic; literary, scientific, technical, artistic, and whatever else stemming from their work, achieving results such as that their example can serve as a stimulus for the entire civil society and in particular for young people". Since 1996 the award had given annually to a variety of "outstanding fellow citizens" from the region. And finally Ralph was happy to say that our Board of Directors has approved having our Club "twin" with the Rotary Club of Corigliano Rossano in Southern Italy (D2100). Ralph says the Corigliano Rossano club has many similarities to our Club. The current District 2100 Governor Maria Rita is from that club and is the 1st woman District Governor in Southern Italy and she was also the first woman President there as well. Our Club is already "twinned" with the Rotary Club of Amantea which

is also in Southern Italy (D2100). Ralph is also an honorary member of another Rotary Club there.

Peter Dusek – Peter was happy that he will be "sworn in" today as a new member and that he will be happy to "help out in any way he can".



Dates to Remember

Tuesday – October 29th – York Rotaract General Meeting

President Weiting Xu advises that a general meeting of the York Rotaract Club will be held at 7:00PM on Tuesday, October 29th, 2013 at Calumet College Room 100 (York University). Maati Lahroussi has invited Shams Umar to speak about Commercial Cards for roughly 30 minutes and "we also have many items on the table to share with the general members". Weiting adds that "we would love for any Rotary members to join us! Free of charge and refreshments (pizza/burgers/snacks/etc.) are provided". Please contact them if you are able to attend at: email (rotaract.yorku@gmail.com), text (416-779-3068), or RSVP online: <https://rotaractyorku.typeform.com/to/AEYUZg>

Community Services Committee November 04, 2013, 7.00 p.m. – Venue Liz Read's Residence

Contact Hugh Williams

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Board of Directors Meeting – November 11, 2013

6.00 PM – Venue Michael Bell's Residence. Contact:

Ron Miller.

Rotary Etobicoke – Hands On Project

By Hugh Williams

The Rotary Club of Etobicoke was pleased to fund and prepare 80 Halloween goodie bags including apples to four Women's Shelters for families to share the joy of Halloween.

Halloween costumes were also provided.

Attached is a photo of the 80 Halloween bags and Halloween costumes that RCoE/Hands-On Etobicoke funded and created. I contacted all the shelters to get their permission and they were extremely grateful for Rotary's contribution and kind thoughts for their families. Ernestine's, Anduhyaun and Nekenan will have in house parties, however, Women's Habitat will allow their children to go out Trick or Treating. So Ursula, Director at Women's Habitat, asked if we could fund some costumes for the children. Hence the costumes.

