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## Ambassadors on the beach

Nostalgic stories of surf and sand

U.S. AMBASSADOR DAVID WILKINS TAKES US TO HIS SOUTH CAROLINA BEACH HOUSE WHERE HE READS UP ON CANADA AND TOSSES TENNIS BALLS INTO THE OCEAN FOR HIS DOG TO FETCH.

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Margo Roston on **Japan's ambassadorial residence**  
George Fetherling on **films that flunked history**



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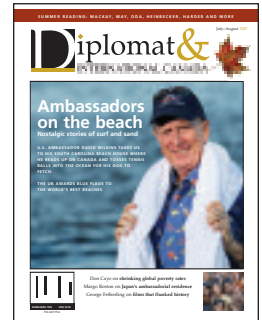
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**PUBLISHER**

Neil Reynolds

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER**

Donna Jacobs

**EDITOR**

Jennifer Campbell

**ART DIRECTOR**

Paul Cavanaugh

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

Daniel Drolet

George Abraham

**CULTURE EDITOR**

Margo Roston

**COPY EDITOR**

Roger Bird

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Stephen Beckta

Don Cayo

Margaret Dickenson

Charles Enman

George Fetherling

William Fisher

Betty Nygaard King

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Ulle Baum

Jana Chytilova

Larry Dickenson

Frank Scheme

Dyanne Wilson

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Jessie Reynolds

**WEBMASTER**

Leslee McCabe

**PUBLISHER EMERITUS**

Lezlee Cribb

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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**SUBMISSIONS**

*Diplomat & International Canada* welcomes submissions. Contact Jennifer Campbell, editor, at editor@diplomatonline.com or (613) 231-8476.

**DIPLOMAT & INTERNATIONAL CANADA**

P.O. Box 1173, Station B

Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1P 5R2

Phone: (613) 259-3038

Fax: (613) 259-5481

E-mail: info@diplomatonline.com

[www.diplomatonline.com](http://www.diplomatonline.com)



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## News from the beach

U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins tells us that for him, the beach is a place to relax, spend time with family and friends, and meditate. For Dominican Republic Ambassador Eduardo J. Tejera, going to the beach has been a part of his life since birth. Romanian Ambassador Elena Stefoi calls the beach the place where she goes to think, the place where she “grew up” spiritually and intellectually. Jamaican High Commissioner Evadne Coye says the beach is where she and her family meet for special times. For Bahamian High Commissioner Philip Smith, it’s the perfect place for a mix of coconut water and rum. Turkish Ambassador Aydemir Erman says the beach brings back fond childhood memories.

Yes, the beach means something special to anyone who’s ever set foot on one. For me, the beach at my husband’s cottage in Prince Edward Island is a place where I can relax without a care in the world beyond choosing a cocktail for happy hour later on. But I know that beaches – great beacons for tourist dollars – mean far more than that for many countries. And the six envoys in our cover series all know beaches are more than frivolous getaway destinations – they mean big bucks. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimates that tourism worldwide generates \$7 trillion, a full 14 per cent of the entire globe’s GDP. The council forecasts these numbers will double within a decade and many countries see those dollars spent near sand and surf. Dominican Republic offers a case in point: about 3.5 million tourists – more than one third of the national population of nine million – flock to its shores each year.

Turn to page 10 to read about the beaches the diplomats chose when we asked them for their favourites. In the same package, you’ll also find a primer on Blue Flag beaches, a unique UN pro-



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

gram that evaluates the water quality, environmental health and services of beaches.

Also in Dispatches, you’ll find Don Cayo’s update on global poverty. The good news is increased prosperity is lifting 1.5 million people per month out of abject poverty. The bad? More than a billion people worldwide still live on less than a dollar a day. Some 2.6 billion, about 40 per cent of the global population, live on less than a toonie a day. Mr. Cayo, who specializes in reporting on global poverty issues, looks at ways to combat the realities behind these dire statistics.

You’ll find much else. George Fetherling gives us a look at African history as represented and misrepresented in books and movies. And turn to page 26 to find out what light reading Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, his secretary of state Helena Guergis, and former deputy minister Peter Harder will be tossing in their beach bags this season.

Up front, we have quotes from the world’s religious leaders in Verbatim and an interview with Honduran Ambassador Beatriz Valle who tells us how she went from dentistry to diplomacy, and why she likes to sing in public.

In Delights, writer Margo Roston brings us a feature on Waterstone, the majestic Ottawa residence of Japanese Ambassador Tsuneo Nishida. Food writer Margaret Dickenson dishes on salads, and wine writer Stephen Beckta makes a ruling on the best white for summer. Finally, George Fetherling has the last word in Destinations where he shares his somewhat surreal adventures in Hanoi. Enjoy.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat* magazine.

## UP FRONT

You would think getting David Wilkins to agree to be photographed to illustrate an interview he did on his beach getaway would be a challenge. Even more so when we asked him to pose wearing a beach shirt and holding a towel around his neck. Oh, and did we mention we can only do it if the sun’s shining? No problem. Mr. Wilkins was willing to reschedule when it rained, and he showed up with three additional shirts in case photographer Jana Chytilova didn’t like the one he was wearing. “He was more than accommodating on short notice,” Ms. Chytilova said. She said the superpower envoy was “totally pleasant and quite willing to do whatever I asked.”



## CONTRIBUTORS

George Fetherling, author and poet



*The Globe and Mail* has cited George Fetherling, the Vancouver poet, novelist and cultural commentator, as a person “who, for most of his life, has been thinking about what makes good writing, and it shows.” *The Montreal Gazette* has called him “a mercurial, liberal intelligence . . . the kind of which English Canada has too short a supply.” To the *Toronto Star*, he is simply a “legendary” figure in Canadian writing. He has published more than 50 volumes of fiction, verse, memoir, travel narrative, history and criticism. His best known books are *Travels by Night: A Memoir of the Sixties* (1994 – recently adapted for the stage), *Selected Poems* (1994), and the novel *Jericho* (2005). His latest is *Tales of Two Cities: A Novella Plus Stories*.

Stephen Beckta, *Diplomat’s* wine columnist



Stephen Beckta graduated from Algonquin College’s Sommelier program in 1998, and spent the first part of his career in New York City. He worked for two years at Café Boulud for celebrated chef Daniel Boulud, and for two years at Eleven Madison Park with restaurateur Danny Meyer before returning to his home town. His restaurant, Beckta dining & wine, has received glowing reviews from *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Ottawa Citizen* and *The Montreal Gazette*. It has a CAA/AAA four-diamond rating and the *National Post* and *Ottawa Magazine* call it the best restaurant in Ottawa. Mr. Beckta is currently a governor of the National Capital Sommelier Guild.

In an excerpt from *The Sikh Times* (Oct. 23, 2006), Journalist **Chander Suta Dogra** discusses long hair and turbans with Sikh religious leaders:

Across Punjab, and more so in the countryside, young members of the community are giving up the most visible religious symbol of Sikh identity - long hair and the turban. The trend, which has been growing in the last four to five years, has reached 'epidemic' proportions and now has the Sikh religious leadership worried so much so that desperate campaigns have been launched to revive the use of the turban.

**Avtar Singh Makkar**, President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.), the highest decision-making body for the Sikhs, confirms this trend.

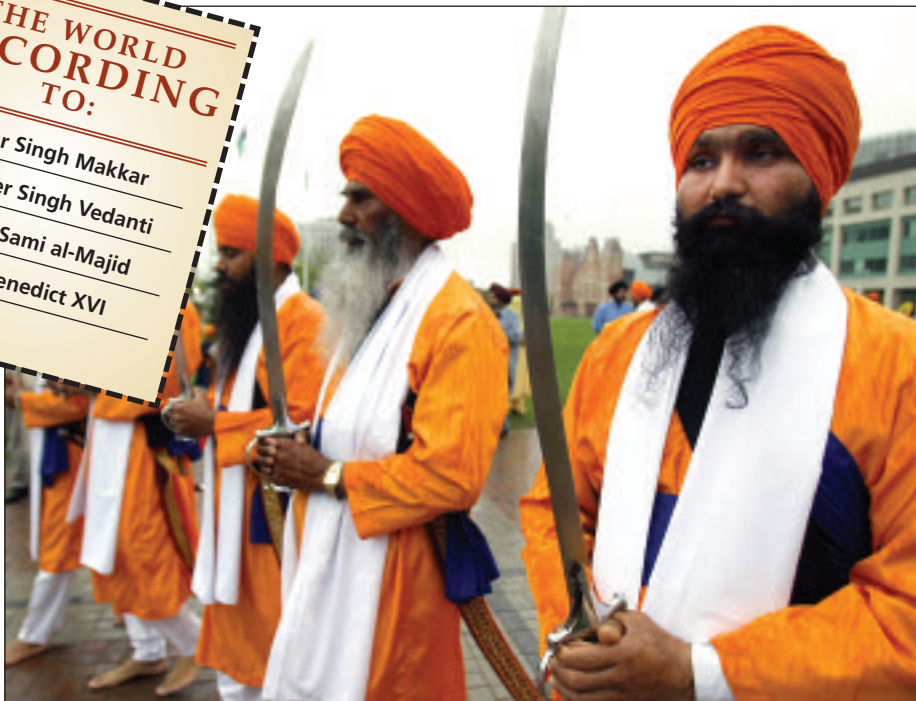
"Yes, it's true that in many places about 80 per cent of Sikh youth have indeed cut their hair. Sadly the 'dastar bandhi samaagam' (a turban-tying ceremony for young boys), too, has become rare in villages because very few boys of 13 or 14 years of age have long hair."

But why are Sikhs, otherwise very dedicated to their religion, saying goodbye to turbans and going in for haircuts? Scholars say it is a combination of various factors, both social and economic, at play. The most common reason cited is the convenience of not having to go through the elaborate rigmarole of maintaining a beard and tying a turban.

Says **Baldev Singh**, the patriarch of a large family in Adliwal near Amritsar,

**THE WORLD ACCORDING TO:**

- Avtar Singh Makkar
- Joginder Singh Vedanti
- Sheikh Sami al-Majid
- Pope Benedict XVI



THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

"Except I and my two brothers, all our sons and grandsons have shorn their hair. It does pain me to see my family like this but no one listens to us nowadays." His daughter-in-law Roominder Kaur is quite happy with a clean-shaven son as she doesn't have to go through the tedium of combing and tying his hair each morning.

It is common knowledge that drug abuse and liquor consumption in Punjab has reached unprecedented levels. Sixty per cent of the youth in the 14-25 year age group are estimated to be drug users. Sikh intellectuals link this with the trend to shed turbans. This is because Sikhism prohibits smoking and use of intoxicants.

Points out the **Akal Takht jathedar** [chief], **Joginder Singh Vedanti**:

"Smoking or taking drugs with a turban on one's head makes a Sikh feel more guilty of breaching his faith. The absence of his kesh (long hair) and turban frees him from such qualms."

\* \* \*

**Pope Benedict XVI**

"In cooperation with parents, the social communications and entertainment industries can assist in the difficult but sublimely satisfying vocation of bringing up children, through presenting edifying



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“How disheartening and destructive it is to us all when the opposite occurs. Do not our hearts cry out, most especially, when our young people are subjected to debased or false expressions of love which ridicule the God-given dignity of every human person and undermine family interests?”

*Source: Message on 40th World Communication Day, The Vatican, 24 January 2006*

“It is important to recognize the fundamental value of parents’ example and the benefits of introducing young people to children’s classics in literature, to the fine arts and to uplifting music.

“While popular literature will always have its place in culture, the temptation to sensationalize should not be passively accepted in places of learning. Beauty, a kind of mirror of the divine, inspires and vivifies young hearts and minds, while ugliness and coarseness have a depressing impact on attitudes and behaviour.

“How could one explain this ‘entertainment’ to the countless innocent young people who actually suffer violence, exploitation and abuse?

“Again I appeal to the leaders of the media industry to educate and encourage producers to safeguard the common good, to uphold the truth, to protect individual human dignity and promote respect for the needs of the family.”

“Programs that inculcate violence and anti-social behavior, or that vulgarize human sexuality, are unacceptable, and even more so when directed at children.

“The profound impact upon the mind of new vocabulary and of images, which the electronic media in particular so easily introduce into society, cannot be overestimated. Precisely because contemporary media shape popular culture, they themselves must overcome any temptation to manipulate, especially the young, and instead pursue the desire to form and serve.

“In this way they protect rather than erode the fabric of a civil society worthy of the human person.”

*Source: Message on 41st World Communication Day, The Vatican, May 20, 2007*

On the fourth day of the Pope’s recent visit to Brazil, he heard moving stories from former cocaine and heroin addicts. After donating \$100,000 to a treatment center, he told 1,500 recovering addicts wearing white shirts with yellow sleeves, representing the Vatican’s flag, that they



Pope Benedict XVI

UN PHOTO: ESKINDER DEBEBE

must become “ambassadors of hope.”

“The Lord has given you this opportunity for physical and spiritual recovery, so vital for you and your families. In turn, society expects you to spread this precious gift of health among your friends and all the members of the community.”

The Pope said drug abuse was a scourge throughout Latin America.

“I therefore urge the drug dealers to reflect on the grave harm they are inflicting on countless young people and on adults from every level of society,” he said in a speech to recovering addicts at the Farm of Hope (Fazenda da Esperanca) rehabilitation centre in the rural town of Guaratingueta.

“God will call you to account for your deeds. Human dignity cannot be trampled upon in this way,” he said.

*Source: Speech in Guaratingueta, Brazil, May 12, 2007.*

\* \* \*

**Sheikh Sami al-Majid**, mosque imam in Riyadh and professor at Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University

“Narrowing the notion of religiousness to outward appearances instead of the essence of a person – whereby outward appearances become the sole qualifying factor for religiousness so that its presence requires nothing else and its absence cannot be compensated for by anything else – is one of the major errors of the current Islamic awakening.

“Admittedly, we have nothing to go on in assessing the character of other people aside from what they outwardly exhibit. As [Caliph] Umar said: ‘We but hold you to account for what is apparent to us from your deeds.’ However, we need to understand that it is the deeds, the moral conduct, and what a person says that make up this outer aspect of a person, not his mere outward appearance. A person’s ‘look’ indicates nothing more or less than itself. It asserts nothing else. It negates nothing else. It provides no source of praise or condemnation outside of itself. Umar had spoken about deeds, not about dress and appearances.

“Religiousness is not restricted to the trappings of the body, but is rather the sentiments, emotions, and tendencies that emanate from the heart and translate into the outward behavior of the limbs. If loyalties are maintained through a narrow circle of outward trappings, society will split into small factions that are antagonistic, or at the very least, uncooperative with one another. These divisions tend to keep growing to the point that the people feel that they have nothing shared between them.

“A person may have a pure heart, a tongue that restrains itself from licentiousness and evil speech, sound ideas, good character towards others, generosity in charitable spending, fastidiousness in prayer, and integrity in fulfilling his duties to others. Should all of these mighty qualities be cast aside because the person falls short in his outward appearance?

“Should not a person possessing such noble qualities be dearer to our hearts than someone else who has the look of ‘religiousness’ down to a tee, but whose character possesses such ugly qualities that his outward appearances can never hope to mask – like someone who is overbearing towards others, foul and abusive of speech, who denies people their rights, is envious, and who despises and thinks ill of his fellows?

“Finally, I do not want anyone to misunderstand me and think that I am taking the religious teachings regarding our appearance as unimportant or that I am saying it is alright to neglect those matters. That is not what I am saying. I am only saying that the importance of these matters should not be exaggerated to the extent that other important matters are trivialized.”

*Source: www.islamtoday.com, “A Too-Narrow View of Religiousness”, February 23, 2006.*

## The spirit of Italy in Ottawa

For the past seven years, the Italian Embassy has been hosting the third biggest fundraiser Opera Lyra Ottawa has in the run of a year. This year will be no exception as, on July 11, more than 350 opera enthusiasts will fill the backyard of the Italian ambassador's residence.

In a garden-party setting, on the expansive lawn that overlooks Aylmer, they'll drink fine Italian wine and nibble on the country's culinary delicacies. For the \$65 price of admission, they'll also take in an operatic concert featuring at least a couple of performers, as well as a fashion show.

This year's event is scheduled for the Wednesday with Friday as a raindate but, if history repeats itself, there will be no need for a back-up plan.

"We've had a few close calls," said Patti Blute, vice-chair of Opera Lyra's board of directors, and a long-time organizer of the event. "But we've never had to cancel."

People enjoy the concert, and they also enjoy the unobtrusive fashion show by Earlene's House of Fashion. Models, wearing "lovely dresses for the clientele" filter through the cocktail party, showing off their clothing and hats to those who are interested. Earlene Hobin, the store's owner, is a big supporter of Opera Lyra and donates the fashion show.

The embassy provides the sensational location, the serving staff, the food and the drinks, something that would cost Opera Lyra "many thousands" if it tried to do it



Italian Ambassador Gabriele Sardo opens his residence for an annual fundraiser for Opera Lyra. The embassy also provides food and wine for the swish event.

on its own. "Really, it would no longer be a fundraiser," said Cassandra Silver, special events coordinator for the opera company. And, there's a certain priceless cachet to attending a garden party at the home of the Italian ambassador.

"This event is wonderful for a lot of reasons," Ms. Silver said, not least of which is the opportunity to meet and greet opera supporters and get them excited about the upcoming season.

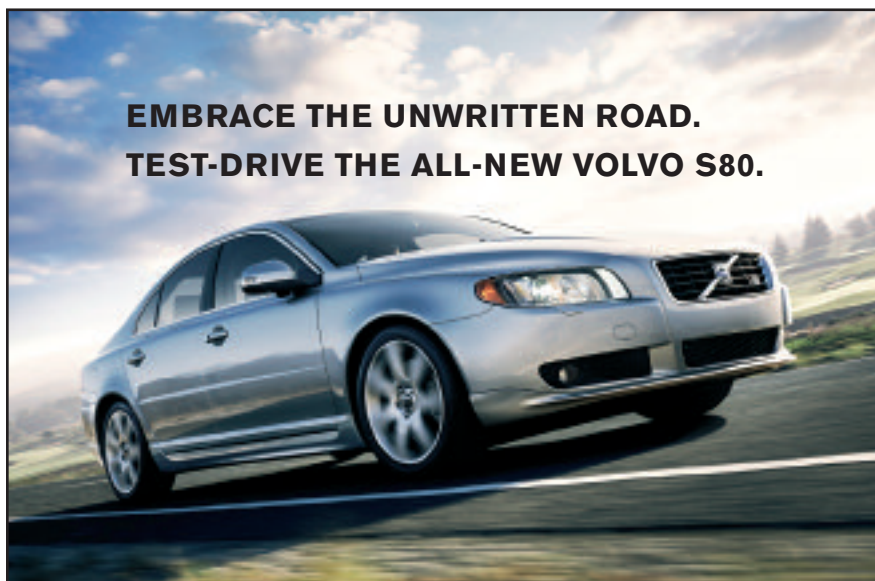
The event raises upwards of \$10,000. The main fundraiser for the company is the Black & White Opera Soirée, held in conjunction with the National Arts Centre Orchestra. That's followed by the annual auction, held at the Ottawa Congress Centre.

"So this is our third most lucrative," Ms. Silver said. "And \$10,000 is a lot for

us – it's a salary for a couple of main-stage performers."

Smaller fundraisers for Opera Lyra also involve embassies, Ms. Blute said. Embassies donate dinners for 10 or 20 guests. In May, Turkish Ambassador Aydemir Erman hosted a dinner for 20. The embassy of Israel has hosted at least a couple of dinners and will host another this year. The French, Costa Rican and Swedish embassies have hosted dinners as has the British High Commission. In the past, Ms. Blute said, the Belgian embassy has also been a big supporter of the dinners. Dinners can raise anywhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000 as guests pay \$100 per person. They also receive at \$60 tax receipt.

"We've had great support from a number of embassies," Ms. Blute said.



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## Harper and Howard are closer than you think



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**PREVIOUS POSTINGS:** Ambassador to France and Israel. Chargé d'Affaires in Iran.

**A**ustralia and Canada are old friends, of course, but injecting new energy into the contemporary relationship can be as satisfying as reinforcing established patterns.

Following the visit to Canada by Australian Prime Minister John Howard in May 2006, a good deal of new energy has been catalysed by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. During 2007, Australia is host to APEC for the first time since the organization began as an informal gathering of ministers from 12 founding countries – including Canada – in Canberra in November 1989.

This year, there will be many exchanges between the two countries, with a series of APEC ministerial and business meetings on trade, foreign affairs, energy, mining, counter-terrorism, women's affairs, transport and health. APEC culminates in the Leaders' Summit in September, where prime ministers Harper and Howard will build on their already close relationship of regular phone calls and bilateral meetings.

But APEC is about much more than Canada and Australia's bilateral relationship. (And yes, APEC is about more than leaders wearing matching shirts).

Since its formation, APEC has established itself as the major, leader-led forum promoting political, economic and practical links into the Asia-Pacific region for Canada and Australia.

No other forum brings Canada and Australia together in this way with the leaders of the United States, China, Japan, Russia, Korea, Chile, Peru and the countries of South-East Asia.

APEC's members account for around 56 per cent of the world economy (including the U.S., Japan and China, three biggest national ones) and nearly half of world trade.

APEC's 21 countries make up 40 per cent of the world's population – more than

2.6 billion people. It involves an annual Leaders' Summit and an agenda to improve regional cooperation as well as the well-being of the people of the Asia-Pacific region.

Bringing world leaders together through APEC works when it comes to the big challenges facing our region and the world. The international response to the East Timor crisis, for example, was formulated at the 1999 APEC Summit in Auckland that year.

Chief among current challenges is climate change. Australia has taken a lead in developing the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, bringing together governments and the private sector from developed and developing countries. Mr. Howard has written to his APEC counterparts placing climate change on the agenda for their meeting in September, noting APEC economies could, "benefit greatly . . . by exercising regional leadership" and noting that APEC "economies together represent 60 per cent of the global economy, [and] have the capacity to shape the relevant international frameworks into the future."

APEC's bottom line is to support free and open trade and investment, because it leads to more jobs, higher incomes and improved living standards. Reaching that goal includes cutting red tape. For example, the APEC Business Travel Card means that businesspeople need only one application to travel between many APEC economies, a major boon for business travellers.

APEC members have cut their own



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, shown here when Mr. Howard visited Canada in May 2006, phone each other often.



tariffs, from 16.9 per cent in 1989 to only 5.5 per cent in 2004, a good record indeed. Last year, APEC leaders called for a study on ways to promote even further regional economic integration, including the possibility of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

**MR. HOWARD HAS WRITTEN TO HIS APEC COUNTERPARTS PLACING CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE AGENDA FOR THEIR MEETING IN SEPTEMBER, NOTING APEC ECONOMIES COULD, "BENEFIT GREATLY . . . BY EXERCISING REGIONAL LEADERSHIP"**

Australia believes APEC can do more in energy security, clean energy and handling climate change. Already, many APEC economies such as Australia, Canada, India, U.S., Korea, China, Japan, for example, are engaged in clean-coal technology, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Asia-Pacific growth, fuelled by the explosive rise of China, the resurgence of South-East Asian economies and the continued strength of the U.S. and Japanese economies, is expected to continue for many years, and APEC has been an important part of the story.

To ensure Australia and Canada continue to benefit from this transformation, our political and practical engagement with the region is a must.

**FACT FILE**

**APEC members:** Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States, Viet Nam

APEC covers 56 per cent of world GDP, 48 per cent of world trade and 40 per cent of world population.

Real GDP for APEC economies increased by 46 per cent from 1989 to 2003, compared to non-APEC which increased by 36 per cent.

Per capita GDP increased by 26 per cent compared with eight per cent for non-APEC economies.

Developing APEC economies grew by 77 per cent – more than double the non-APEC rate.



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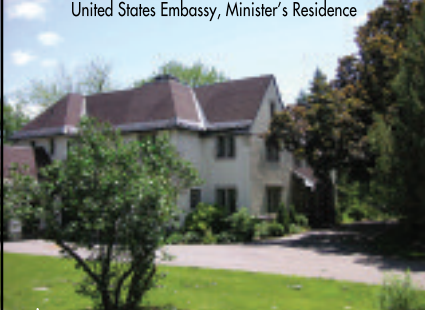
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## A Honduran's journey from dentistry to diplomacy



**Honduran Ambassador Beatriz Valle presented her credentials in September, just three months after her father was murdered on the streets in Honduras. She spoke to Diplomat's editor Jennifer Campbell about the pain of losing her mentor; how she went from dentistry to diplomacy; and about how she wanted to pursue a singing career. Although the 39-year-old envoy prefers lounge and jazz when she's behind the mic, Handel plays through her laptop during the interview.**

**Diplomat magazine:** Tell me about your varied career so far – you even studied dentistry, didn't you?

**Beatriz Valle:** I finished my (dentistry schooling) with my classmates. My ex-husband worked as a dentist and I helped him with some surgeries at his practice but I knew early on I didn't like it. Then I got pregnant and became a full-time mom. When my daughter got old enough for me to do something else, I started studying marketing and I was stopped by a woman on the street asking me if I wanted to be in a commercial. The owner of the advertising agency came to see the ad shoot and he asked me what I did. I said I did a bit of translation. I started doing translation for him and then he invited me to come and work for him. I said I didn't know anything about advertising but he convinced me. I became like his right hand and he taught me many things.

**DM:** How did you come to be appointed ambassador?

**BV:** While I was at the advertising agency, our current president was minister of the social investment funds that were created all over Latin America. They get money from the World Bank. We handled this account. When he left the social investment fund, he said he wanted to run for president and we started working on his campaign. When my project finished, I was offered to be the executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce.

I was there for three years and volunteered for COHIP, an association of entrepreneurs, which I really enjoyed. At the same time, I started getting my master's degree. All this time, I was helping my party and my candidate (the president). And then my candidate won.

**DM:** And he called you?

**BV:** He asked if I'd like to work for the government. I said I'd think about it. When I got back to him, I said I'd like to have something outside the country. I wanted my daughter to experience another culture.

**DM:** How did he respond?

**BV:** He said he'd rather I stay there but said it was possible. I wouldn't have asked for the U.S. because I'm not a career diplomat. Canada was available and I knew there had been political appointees here before so I asked for this.

**DM:** Are there differences between diplomacy and the private sector?

**BV:** Yes, things happen a little bit slowly so it teaches you a lot of patience. But I think things are starting to happen and I'm very excited. I'm working on bringing temporary workers to Canada. Honduras had a bad experience a few years ago. There was a bad screening process and some of the workers tried to stay here. So I've encountered some obstacles because of the reputation people from my country have in Canada. Speaking to a couple of businesses, I've learned that their lawyers recommend not bringing Honduran workers. I have to work this out with the government. My minister of foreign affairs will bring a high-profile delegation. I'm hoping it will happen in the next two months and I know it will give some credibility from my government in terms of their being accountable for what these Honduran workers will do. We cannot give a 100 per cent guaranty but we just want the same opportunities as every other country gets.

**DM:** What is the major issue between Honduras and Canada?

**BV:** At this time, it's a matter of getting the free trade agreement signed. It's multilateral (Central America) and that

makes it a lot more of an issue. If it were just Honduras and Canada, we could settle our issues much more quickly. We need to restart negotiations because they are dead right now. I think we're going to get to it.

**DM:** Does Canada ignore Central America?

**BV:** No, but I think Canada has not been the most open with free trade – not completely open like other countries. But it is starting to open up.

**DM:** You held a concert at Hot Peppers restaurant in March to raise money for a hospital in Honduras. Do you have plans for more?

**BV:** Yes. I cannot hold big fundraisers – I have to do it in small steps. Last time, we raised \$1,200. I've never taken formal training for my singing. I had a few lessons but it wasn't really anything formal. I had wanted to sing for a living but my father advised me against that.

**DM:** You haven't returned to Honduras since you arrived in Canada last July. Why not?

**BV:** My father was killed on the street and it's still too painful to go back. I was appointed by my president in January (2006) and after that, I traveled with my father to receive my diploma (master's degree). We came home and a month later, he was killed. Some ladies were being mugged a block away from my home and he got involved and tried to defend these ladies and he was killed.

He was 71 and full of energy. He had survived his gallbladder exploding and he survived two aortic aneurysms. He was a fabulous person and he was very wise. He taught me tolerance. The day he died, he kissed my mother, said he'd be back soon and five minutes later he was dead.

**DM:** Is that typical of violence in Honduras?

**BV:** No, not for tourists. I don't want to go to Honduras, not because I'm afraid something's going to happen to me, but because there's too much emotion. Those emotions are all still there. When I think about going back right now, I want to cry. The time will come but it's still too painful for now. This loss was too much. He was my mentor and my friend. He and I traveled to Europe when I finished my degree and we had 24 days together. That was a gift.

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Why,  
all fun aside,  
we need  
ocean  
beaches

**W**hen star-quality feminist Gloria Steinem asked economist John Kenneth Galbraith to write a forward to *The Beach Book*, he said yes, because – he later explained — he liked her. And she wrote it because she loved to explore beaches as a child near her father’s small Michigan lake resort. “Nothing is as transient, useless, or completely desirable as a suntan,” she wrote. “What a tan will do is make you look good, and that justifies anything.”

Sold with sunscreen inside the cover, the 1963 volume was her first book and her only ever light-read. She even suggested fantasies for sunbathers: “You have just dealt a crushing defeat in public debate to (choose one: William Buckley Jr., Hugh Hefner, David Susskind, Ayn Rand), who is being laughed off the stage.”

It was an odd exchange, she the trenchant political writer and he, the work-ethic-driven Ontario farm boy who wrote some 20 books, advised U.S. presidents and taught at Harvard University.

“Total physical and mental inertia are highly agreeable, much more so than we allow ourselves to imagine,” Mr. Galbraith wrote. “A beach

not only permits such inertia but enforces it, thus neatly eliminating all problems of guilt. It is now the only place in our overly active world that does.”

Mr. Galbraith left to others the observation that beaches lap up tourist dollars and send them cascading through economies rich and poor. But, then, we’ve always been on this gold standard: Tourists take home the golden tan and leave the gold behind.

In 2000, worldwide tourism generated US \$3.5 trillion – much of it at water’s edge. The travel industry accounted for more than 11 percent of the world’s GDP and engaged 8.2 percent of the world’s workforce.

Today, you can double tourism to \$7 trillion, as calculated by the World Travel & Tourism Council. That’s 14 percent of \$50 trillion in global GDP. And, says the Council, double it again within a decade.

Who better to ask about beaches than the diplomats to Canada from some of the world’s greatest shores? These emissaries happily obliged with vivid adjectives and anecdotes about their favourite swimming beaches, tips on what to do when you’re waterlogged or sunned out – and, of course, observations on the magnitude of coastal economics.

PAWLEYS ISLAND | SOUTH CAROLINA | UNITED STATES

## David Wilkins' seventh heaven

The Wilkins' rustic beach house on Pawleys Island in South Carolina is a perfect place to feel the surf hit you, and to meditate, Mr. Wilkins tells **Donna Jacobs**.

**"T**he beach is my getaway, my place to relax and unwind – sort of the seventh heaven," says U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins.

"Mainly, it's being with the family, whether it's lying in the hammock, walking on the beach, sitting on the dock, watching the sun go down – it equates to being with your family and enjoying your family and relaxing."

The family jogs, plays volleyball, goes fishing and sea kayaking. And though he posed with a big smile beside his sons' surfboard for a family snapshot, the ambassador laughs, "I assure you, I didn't get on that thing and try to do that because you can bust up pretty good – I never tried to surf."

The Wilkins' getaway is on Pawleys Island, connected by two short causeways to South Carolina's mainland. Their beach house, he says, "is a magnet to get the kids to come."

"There are no white shag carpets in that home. It's all boards and it's OK if a dog were to run through it or if a child with a wet bathing suit runs through it. It's not going to hurt it, so it's fun. And it's very rustic, very laid back."

Built in 1848, it's one of the seven original homes on the eight-kilometre-long island. The house is still called The Summer Academy, from its historical use when rice planters hired a tutor from New York to live there and to teach their sons. The loft still has its original built-in cubicle storage shelves at the head of each bunk.

For a decade the Wilkins have shared the simple, veranda-wrapped house with two other families. It's mostly original – mostly, because in September 1989, Hurricane Hugo picked up the house and dropped it on the road. The previous owner painstakingly restored all but the kitchen.

The real attraction, of course, is the beach. Mr. Wilkins says, "If you can't relax there, you need professional help, because it's a great place to unwind, and to throw balls into the ocean and watch



Clockwise from the left: David Wilkins, sons James and Robert, Lily the Maltese, wife Susan and Speaker (the Springer spaniel) at their summer home on Pawleys Island, S.C.

your dog retrieve 'em." (Between parents and sons, the Wilkins have five dogs – three of them retrieving Springer spaniels.)

While the island is free of commerce, across the causeway the town of Pawleys Island offers restaurants with shrimp and oysters, "great fresh seafood," he says, and golfing.

Pawleys Island is just over an hour's drive north of the shops and traditional southern charm of Charleston and 30 minutes south of tourist-magnet Myrtle Beach with its ocean swimming, water parks, mini-golf and hotels. The Wilkins celebrated the 46th annual CanAm Days there – along with thousands of Canadians – during March break this year.

"I can't emphasize enough the importance of the beaches to South Carolina," says Mr. Wilkins. "They're huge to our economy."

"When I was in state government, along with the federal government, we funded huge beach renourishment programs," he says. (A lawyer in the firm his father started in 1946, Mr. Wilkins then served for 25 years as South Carolina's Speaker of the House before President George W. Bush appointed him ambassador to Canada two years ago.)

Over the years, the Wilkins family has celebrated some Christmas, Thanksgiving and July 4 holidays at the beach house. And, four years ago, son Robert married

Stephanie Rowell a few miles away on the mainland, where she grew up. The afternoon of the wedding, bridesmaids and attendants "sat on the beach, got sunburned and played volleyball."

A beach house painting hangs in the Wilkins' ambassadorial Rockcliffe residence as a warm reminder when the snow flies. They are saving the last week of this summer for a family gathering on the island.

From there, Mr. Wilkins will stay in touch with the Ottawa embassy and might work a couple of hours a day. "Sometimes I'll actually get to read a whole book." Tom Clancy has given way to Canadian history or politics these days. "Mostly it's magazines and information I've been storing and stuffing in folders for when I get a chance to go to the beach."

But, atypically, the ordinarily kinetic ambassador just relaxes: "And, late in the day, you can sit on the beach as the surf hits you, sit there and just look at the ocean, meditate, philosophize."

His frequent travels in Canada aside, when Mrs. Wilkins asks him: 'Where do you want to go on a trip?' his answer doesn't change. It's always: "This is where I want to go – my favourite place to hang out."

*Donna Jacobs is Diplomat's associate publisher.*

CASA DE CAMPO | LA ROMANA | DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## Swim, snorkel, scuba-dive – and dine

As an economist, departing Dominican Republic Ambassador Eduardo J. Tejera tells **Donna Jacobs** beaches aren't just fun in the sun – they are national asset No. 1

**"S**ince I was born, the beach has been part of my life," says Dominican Republic Ambassador to Canada Eduardo J. Tejera. "We are an island nation and the beach is our natural playground and habitat."

Even from his earliest years, he remembers surf and sand.

"We all played and swam a lot and water-skied. I have a lot of memories of good times with friends and families, particularly when I was very young, on Boca Chica." It's still a popular Caribbean resort, 25 minutes southeast of his home in the capital of Santo Domingo, and he recalls its coconut groves and flowers.

And he also remembers the lessons for life at the water's edge.

"I think I must have been four or five years old and I was afraid to swim in the pool at our house," he says. "I was always in the corner with my hands on the wall.

"My father saw me: 'You must learn to swim. You're a man and we live on an island.'

"And he picked me up and he threw me in middle of the pool. At the beginning, I went down and I got so scared, I almost drowned. And in the end, like a little dog [at this point he makes a dog-paddling motion], I learned to swim."

**I**n Dominican Republic, beaches surpass all other national economic forces. The country's more than 500 kilometres of private and public beaches are within reach of a four-hour drive.

"Their extraordinary beauty is God-given," says the economist, author, businessman and bureaucrat-turned-ambassador. "The sand is very white, very soft like refined powder, and the Caribbean water has a particular crystal transparency and aqua colour."

Add to this the preservation – by law – of greenery which beautifies the natural setting, and a successful strategy to match vacations to every pocketbook and mode.

The result is tourist development proceeding at a rapid but orderly pace.

"I have a home in Casa de Campo in La Romana province, which I enjoy very much with my wife and five children and four grandsons," Dr. Tejera says. "We are either on the beach, swimming and playing on the sand, or in the swimming pool and Jacuzzi at the house."

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**"MY FATHER SAW ME:  
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ON AN ISLAND.'**

Like many of their fellow citizens, the Tejeras picnic at their beach house, 100 kilometres east of their Santo Domingo home. The staple is seafood: shrimp, lobsters, king fish, red snapper, grouper. They can buy it from local fishermen "right there on the beach – the catch of the night."

For years, he enjoyed snorkeling and scuba diving – and while his last scuba dive was eight years ago, the beach and ocean remain his chief recreation. Fishing is "too slow for me."

To give a sense of where all this takes place, he springs up from his chair in his



Ambassador Eduardo J. Tejera (centre) holds his grandson Esteban. His son Carlos and niece Sarah Tromcoso flank him.

Metcalfe Street office in downtown Ottawa to point out places on the wall map behind his desk.

He points to the shore east of his beach home, near Saona Island, where hotels guests go snorkeling and scuba diving. "Once you're swimming below the surface," he says, "you see a different world," of coral and multi-coloured fish.

**I**n the last 10 years, the country has broadened its tourism offerings with high-end luxury resorts like Casa de Campo and Punta Cana on the island's eastern tip.

The biggest resort project is the five-star Cap Cana, on the southeast coast. There, homes, condos and a marina have an emerald setting among three golf courses designed by Jack Nicklaus. Donald Trump, who is a major promoter for the development, sold more than US\$300 million in real estate lots within four hours in May.

The island is served by seven international airports, some designed and managed by Vancouver International Airport and some servicing direct and charter flights from Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. The Canadian connection is strong, with Canadians having the highest rate of return trips, fully twice the European rate.

Dr. Tejera calls Canadians "a sort of pioneer of tourists to the island." They were first to arrive during the 1980s, usually to Puerto Plata on the north coast facing the Atlantic.

"Going from 15 degrees below zero in

a mere four-hour plane ride to 30 degrees above zero," he laughs, has much to do with the Canadian appetite for Dominican beaches.

On the northeast coast, on the Peninsula of Samana, excursions leave from Las Terrena and El Portillo, taking tourists to beautiful beaches and little islands. On the island's north coast lies Puerto Plata's Playa Dorada (Golden Beach).

Dating to 1984, Puerto Plata was the World Bank's second tourist loan project (Cancun, Mexico was the first.) The bank's experts set international standards on water quality, infrastructure, resorts and environment. Controls continue – including a three-storey limit on hotel height and a mandated ministry of tourism approval for master plans and architecture. Dr. Tejera was closely involved as deputy manager and economic advisor of Dominican Republic's Central Bank.

The north shore hosts two annual international surfing tournaments in the village of Cabarete. Participants and their entourage live in small hotels and eat at little restaurants right on the beach. "You sit down to a humble table of wood or plastic where, beside Dominican restaurants, are Italian, French and German restaurants" with chefs mostly from those homelands, Dr. Tejera explains.

These visitors and others dance, to disco, rock, merengue and salsa, "ways that people meet and mix with the local communities," he says, "and it's a lot of fun and very affordable."

Halfway between Cabarete and Puerto Plata is Sosua, with a protected bay ideal for snorkellers.

And on the southern coast, there is Bayhíbe: "Beautiful scenery and bays. You can see lots of boats, excursions, fishing, snorkeling, water-rafting, glass-bottom boats and catamarans."

It is also a Blue Flag beach – the international designation for high standards of cleanliness, water quality, environmental practices and educational programs. (See the Blue Flag story on page 19.)

And for those who have met their quota of tropical sunshine, there are the mountains. Cordillera Central's highest peak rises more than 3,000 meters above sea level and provides river rafting, swimming and horseback riding, along with the slow tempo of mountain village life.

But mainly, for tourists, it's the beaches. And from the beauty springs the bounty: Some 60 per cent of the economy is service industry – mostly tourism. And while the country has not es-

ports ended up in a dessert."

Today, the country's diversified economy, with a free-trade industrial zone, runs on exports of textiles, high-tech equipment, remittances from Dominicans abroad, sugar, coffee, cacao, cigars (as the world's biggest producer of cigars) and minerals – especially ferro-nickel from mines owned by Canada's Falconbridge Limited.

Canada's Barrick Gold and Goldcorp are investing more than \$2 billion in a huge gold mine with an estimated 18 million ounces in gold reserves, along with extensive amounts of zinc, copper and silver.

He is watching further trade developments up close: He is, and will remain, involved in his country's free trade negotiations with the Canadian government even when his two-and-a-half-year ambassadorial term ends this summer and he returns home.

"Given the significance of Canada to the Dominican Republic – diplomatically, economically and culturally – one can understand why the Dominican government, especially our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism, is working hard to open the door wide to Canadian leisure and business travelers in order to build potentially new ties between both nations," says Eugenio Matos Gomez, counsellor-special advisor of the Dominican Embassy, responsible for the press and cultural section.

For sheer impact the country's visitors, who equal one-third of the native population of nine million, have lifted and shifted the island's society and demographics. Young people staff the hotels, and all those restaurant meals drive the agricultural sector's production of rice, fruits, vegetables, fish, meat and milk.

In this way, many a sun-starved tourist has indirectly sent the children of a Dominican fisherman and hotel worker through high school and university.

Donna Jacobs is *Diplomat's* associate publisher.



aped the problems and tensions of any modern society, he says, "a very, very minor incidence of crime" makes it basically safe for its citizens and visitors.

The result is "entertainment and vacations for 3.5 million tourists from all over the world, 600,000 of them Canadians," he says. "Twenty-five years ago, our main source of income was sugar, coffee, and cocoa and tobacco. In the '60s and '70s, we were called a dessert economy," he laughs, "because all of our foodstuff ex-



VAMA VECHÉ BEACH | THE BLACK SEA | ROMANIA

## A Black Sea beach for reflection

Romanian Ambassador Elena Stefoi returns to Vama Veche each year even though the artist enclave of her youth has been replaced by discos and hotels, writes **Jennifer Campbell**

**F**or Romanian Ambassador Elena Stefoi, Vama Veche Beach on the Black Sea is the place she goes to think. She went in 1999 to think about the offer from her country's foreign minister to become Romania's consul general in Montreal. And she returned in March 2005 to contemplate her new job as ambassador to Canada.

As Ms. Stefoi tells it, she did all her growing up at this beach, just a short walk from the border with Bulgaria. It sounds odd coming from someone who didn't set foot in the place until she was 23 but she means "growing up" spiritually and intellectually – Vama Veche is not where she hauled pails of sand as a toddler.

Indeed, sand castles weren't part of her youth at all. She "met the sea for the first time" at Vama Veche (the name means "old customs point") in 1977. It was long before the fall of the Communist regime and the place was an artists' enclave, a beach for bohemians and beatniks. Ms. Stefoi, who spent much of her early career as a journalist and writer, with five published books of poetry, fit in immediately.

"The village became famous in the 1960s as an oasis of freedom, far from the prying eyes of what was then a dictatorship," Ms. Stefoi said.

And the Vama Veche of that era was completely devoid of commerce. There were no hotels. Artists simply boarded with one of the peasant families in the village, paying some rent and living communally.

"There were no hotels, no restaurants, just a small fishing village with a single pub in the middle," she said.

Just an hour's drive away, was another beach, known as Neptun, where dictator



Ms. Stefoi at Vama Veche, her spiritual home.



Nicolae Ceausescu had "the most elegant and the most luxurious resort.

"The establishment was in Neptun, with its luxury and excesses," Ms. Stefoi said. "The true artists were in Vama Veche."

Between her first visit to Vama Veche's seemingly endless fine-sand beaches, and the fall of communism in 1989, she returned every year, and still does, but her hippie enclave is now overrun by tourists, restaurants, and hotels.

"Now, hotels, motels and discos are cropping up across previously pristine stretches, many exploiting an absence of law regulating development," she said. "Now, it is a kind of California dreaming."

Still, while the older, ambassadorial Ms. Stefoi is more likely now to summer down the street in Neptun, the memories pull her back to Vama Veche and she usually does a day trip to meet friends and take in some of the beach's cultural festivals, the vestiges of its former identity.

Her favourite memory is of her 30th

birthday party. "I used to celebrate my birthday in Vama Veche and when I got to 30, all my friends made a great, unforgettable party. They caught a big fish – a shark – and cooked it. We drank a lot, and some famous writers wrote and dedicated their poetry to me.

"Some are in New York now, some in Berlin, and some have since died," she said. "I have many memories but if you ask me for one in particular, that would be it."

Day trips from Vama Veche are easy and there are many other beaches to explore, including Mamaia, also along the Black Sea, which is good for families, Ms. Stefoi said. Though she now has her reservations about Vama Veche, she admits it still offers culture. Festivals including the rock music Stufstock and the Callatis Festival, which features various kinds of music, take place there. An hour away, at Neptun, writers can take in the "Days and Nights of Literature" festival.

The beaches of the Black Sea in Romania are inextricably linked to the country's economy because they remain the number one destination for Romanians and are also popular with tourists.

"It's important economically because the main industry in this whole region is tourism now," Ms. Stefoi said. "Now there's a lot of investment there. Of all the tourism dollars in Romania, about 40 per cent come from this region."

*Jennifer Campbell is Diplomat's editor.*

HALF MOON RESORT | MONTEGO BAY | JAMAICA

## Earth, Wind and Fire on a beach

Jamaican High Commissioner Evadne Coye met the lead singer of the classic R&B group by chance on her favourite Jamaican beach, writes Jennifer Campbell

**E**vadne Coye comes from an island nation, so when asked for her favourite beach, she had plenty to choose from. After some deliberation, she decided on the Half Moon Resort on Montego Bay.

Ultimately, it was an obvious pick as she reached back through several years of memories to one visit in particular – in January of this year – when she and her sister Maelin were on the beach, taking pictures of each other. From behind, they heard a deep, male voice asking if they needed someone to snap a shot of them together.

“When we turned around, the face was familiar,” Ms. Coye recalled, and handsome indeed. “I told him I knew his face and after some prompting, he said he was with Earth, Wind and Fire to which my crazy sister replied ‘So Earth, what happened to Wind and Fire?’”

It turned out he was not only their next-door neighbour at the resort but also the well-known R&B band’s lead singer, Philip Bailey. He took several photos of them, then agreed to pose for some of himself. The sisters were the envy of their nieces and nephews who missed this photo-op with fame.

“Naturally, we had a special reason for enjoying the jazz festival that night, which was when they performed,” Ms. Coye said.

The 60-year-old high commissioner has enjoyed a long, award-studded career in Jamaica’s foreign service, including postings in Venezuela, the U.S., Belize and Brussels. She often travels with family, usually one of two sisters. She describes them as “soulmates” in her unmarried life.

The crescent-shaped beach at Half Moon beckons her regularly. Its powdery white sand with a slight gold tint is warm and inviting. Its palm trees and stunted sea-grape trees provide a magnificent



Evadne Coye, left, and her sister Maelin pose at Half Moon resort. Philip Bailey snapped the shot for them.

green backdrop and trace shadows across the sand. The water is clear enough to see the scales on tiny fish darting around your toes. And a coral reef one kilometre from shore tempers the waves enough to disappoint the surfers but provides perfect swimming.

Nearby, there’s a golf course and equestrian centre. The Cockpit Country, also not far, has caves, flora and fauna native to Jamaica and has been proposed as a World Heritage Site. Day trips to Negril beach, with its white sand and beautiful sunsets, can be easily arranged. Montego Bay’s hip strip – with plenty of shopping and entertainment – is nearby. Falmouth, offering rafting on the Martha Brae River or nighttime boat rides off the coast to see plankton glowing in the dark waters, is a 30-minute drive away.

Breakfast at the resort includes a buffet featuring ackee (Jamaica’s national fruit), salt fish with fried dumplings and callaloo (a Jamaican green). The Blue Mountain coffee is to die for, Ms. Coye said, and the fresh, tropical fruit keeps coming. At dinner, the fish is succulent and tropical drinks spiked with Appleton Rum need no further endorsement.

“Breakfast and dinner are all I could talk about at Half Moon – too busy enjoying the property and environs to bother with lunch,” Ms. Coye said.

Fun and scenery aside, as high com-

missioner, Ms. Coye is also keen to speak about the economic benefits of beaches to her country’s economy. Tourism, she’s quick to note, is the island’s principal industry.

“As an island (where) tourism is key, beaches are of tremendous importance,” she said.

In 2006, Jamaica had a record number of visitors, topping the three-million mark. But the joys and benefits of all these visits are tempered by the fact that their tourism industry is based on a delicate resource.

The High Commissioner talked about the threat that climate change holds for small islands. “Hurricanes have caused significant beach erosion along some sections of the coast, including the famous Negril Beach,” she said.

In response, the beach authority is replanting mangrove in some sections to prevent further damage. The Negril Coral Reef Preservation Society is working with the Natural Resources Conservation Authority to protect Negril Marine Park. The conservation authority also organizes school children to participate in International Coastal Clean-up Day every September and presents a “green” trophy to the school that does the most. Further, it is working to reduce land-based pollution which threatens all the country’s coral reefs.

For Jamaica, attractive beaches are nothing short of an economic necessity.

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat’s* editor.

CAPE SANTA MARIA BEACH | LONG ISLAND | THE BAHAMAS

## A perfect, long, powdery beach

Bahamian High Commissioner Philip Smith found it hard to choose a “best beach” but settled on Cape Santa Maria and told **Charles Enman** why

If it's a beach you want, you can't go wrong in The Bahamas, the country's High Commissioner to Canada insists.

“I mean, come up with whatever fantasy you have of how a beach should be, and you're going to find at least one match, and probably several, somewhere in The Bahamas,” Philip Smith says. “We are essentially a country of beaches, and we have something for everyone.”

That said, if he's partial to any of them, it would be Cape Santa Maria Beach on the north part of Long Island, 260 kilometres from Nassau, in the southeast quadrant of the chain of islands that form The Bahamas.

“For out and out beauty, you can't top Cape Santa Maria,” Mr. Smith says. “It's a perfect, long, powdery soft beach. The waters are quiet, and invariably calm and clear – and I always found Cape Santa Maria a wonderful place to swim.”

Snorkellers and scuba divers can see down to depths of more than 20 metres, he says.

“It's the wonderful clarity of our waters,” Mr. Smith explains. “Just off the whiteness of the beach, the water is at first a pale green, which then gives into emerald, and finally shifts towards the blueness of the deeper waters. It's an entire other world.”

Many visitors stay nearby at the Cape Santa Maria Beach Resort, which has 20 beachfront bungalows and a few new villas just steps from the beach. “The resort is nice and they offer wonderful nature tours which many people find fascinating because they take you to several nearby cays on which you have iguanas and other exotic animals.”

Mr. Smith says he's often been at the resort, enjoying a drink, his favourite being a mix of coconut water and rum. “A light drink always, because you wouldn't want to overpower the sweetness of the



Philip Smith, left, picked Cape Santa Maria resort as his favourite

coconut water.”

His favourite beachside foods at Cape Santa Maria are conch salad and conch fritters, both delicacies made from a marine snail. The fritters are deep fried, and the salad usually brings together – besides conch – tomato, onion, celery and cucumber, with something tangy like lemon or lime for dressing.

Tourists who want to take away keepsakes can buy straw craftwork nearby, especially in the town of Simms.

“The work is wonderful,” he says. “There are dolls and placemats, but the most exquisite work, I think, is the ladies' handbags, which are in great demand.”

Though he is fond of Cape Santa Maria Beach, Mr. Smith is quick to insist that it's far from the only one on offer. “We have so many islands, and nearly every one of them has several fine beaches,” he says. “In fact, what we offer tourists, basically,

is variations on beaches.”

The entire Bahamian economy is centered on two sources of revenue – tourism and financial services.

“You must remember we have only 320,000 people, and yet we welcome each year more than five million visitors – and virtually all of those visitors are going to spend a great part of their time on a beach.”

Forty per cent of visitors actually stay at large beachside resorts or in small family-oriented beachside lodgings, he says.

And most of the remaining 60 per cent come in on cruise ships, which spend a day at either of the two largest cities, Nassau or Freeport, and another day at a beach on one of the hundreds of islands.

“Our beaches give you a (taste) of heaven,” Mr. Smith says.

Charles Enman is an Ottawa writer.

SUADIYE | THE BOSPHORUS | TURKEY

## The beaches of childhood

Turkish Ambassador Aydemir Erman tells **Charles Enman** about his memories of spending six-hour stretches on Suadiye Beach in Istanbul

**T**urkish Ambassador Aydemir Erman smiles and nods his head when asked what is his favourite beach in his homeland.

“Ah, this is a question that brings up much nostalgia,” he says. “Because, you see, beaches were a very important part of life in my childhood in Istanbul – a social focus of life and of each day.”

The Ambassador grew up in Suadiye, a small village just across the Bosphorus Strait from Istanbul.

“When I was small, back in the 1950s, it wasn’t properly a part of Istanbul,” he adds, “but this city of 10 million people has expanded and now includes the village.”

Only a short bike ride from his home, the beach that was such a centrepiece of his childhood was called simply Suadiye Beach.

“We young people – but families, too – would go there at 10 in the morning and stay there all day, till maybe four o’clock in the afternoon,” the Ambassador recalls. “The sand was very beautiful and the water was very clear, and I remember it all as a kind of paradise.”

Those were simpler times, he says. There was no television, no DVDs, fewer distractions.

“But it was good, because we made our own fun. Mostly, we would swim – but we also had foot races and bicycle races, and you could play table tennis or volleyball. It was a simple but full life.”

Each beach around Istanbul had its own restaurant, but young people usually brought a snack from home.

“We would have a kind of picnic, often of what we Turks call a shepherd’s salad, with white cheese, tomatoes, cucumbers, and green peppers – very wholesome food.”

Many of the Istanbul beaches, including Suadiye’s, were partly artificial. True enough, you could enter the sea easily



Suadiye Beach, Turkey, is Aydemir Erman’s childhood beach

from almost any point in Istanbul, but the sand on most beaches was trucked in from other locations, usually the Black Sea.

Turkish summers were very hot, but there was less heat on the Asian side of the Strait, where Suadiye is located.

“I would say it was a bit like Rockcliffe (Ottawa’s well-treed wealthy enclave) in the summer – hot, yes, but with lots of trees to bring relief. So many Turks would come there when the heat came, that the village’s population probably increased three or four times.”

Paddle steamboats ferried visitors from Istanbul, a journey that then took about two hours, but today’s boats have reduced that trip to about 20 minutes.

Both genders could share beaches even back then, despite the country’s Muslim heritage, the Ambassador recalls.

Beach fun did not end with the setting of the sun. Each evening, films would be shown in an open-air cinema next to the beach. The Ambassador, now in his early 60s, remembers enjoying the 1954 MGM film *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* with Howard Keel and Jane Powell.

For some years, Suadiye and some

other Istanbul beaches were closed because the surrounding overpopulation polluted the water. But programs to improve water quality have worked, and the beach reopened this summer.

Beaches have become important to Turkey. With more than 4,000 kilometres of coastline on four seas – the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, the Aegean and the Mediterranean – many tourists spend weeks beachside.

“Millions of tourists come each year to our beaches,” the Mr. Erman says. “Most come to the Aegean and the Mediterranean, where the natural beaches can be several kilometres long, and they spend three or four weeks roasting themselves on all sides.”

Many Aegean and Mediterranean beaches have the Blue Flag designation, meaning that water quality and safety are checked each year by inspectors.

Beaches are good for people, the Ambassador says.

“A little sun is good in itself, but the socializing is ideal since, in bathing suits, you don’t know who’s rich and who’s poor, or who comes from what walk of life.”

Charles Enman is an Ottawa writer.

## Surf's up, and blue flags are flying

Beaches worldwide strive for coveted environmental symbol, writes **Donna Jacobs**

**B**each lovers know their flags: Red – dangerously high surf, strong currents.

Yellow – moderate conditions. Green – calm waters. Purple – dangerous marine life.

But for another kind of rating, what could beat a blue flag with a three-wave logo? It means, “Relax, world-class beach.”

It's a sand and surf Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval that means high water quality, available environmental education, environmentally sensitive management, and safe, well-serviced beaches.

Or, in the words of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): “The Blue Flag is a symbol of coastal environmental quality, which is sought after by local authorities for the status it confers and the attraction it has for the beach tourist.”

In 2006, only 27 years after it was inaugurated in France, the Blue Flag flew over more than 2,549 beaches and 638 marinas in 36 countries, from B to W: Bahamas to Wales.

This year, the Blue Flag Program announced 2,628 beaches and 629 marinas in 31 countries of the Northern Hemisphere – just in time for tourist season. For the first time, marinas in Russia, Bulgaria and Lithuania received Blue Flag designations (please see accompanying table). In September, jurors will evaluate more beaches and marinas in the Southern Hemisphere.

Each beach and marina must re-apply yearly to fly the flag. They apply to the Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education, a non-profit group with members in 49 countries.

The foundation's juries come from UNEP, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the International Lifesaving Association, European Union for Coastal Conservation, the World Conservation Union, an international environmental education expert, the International Council of Marine Industry Associations and the foundation itself.

The process, which takes two years, starts with a beach owner's or municipality's application. A follow-up feasibility study either suggests improvements or approves application for the Blue Flag, which entails a year-long candidacy and a successful re-application before getting in-



ternational Blue Flag status ([www.blueflag.org](http://www.blueflag.org).) A how-to Blue Flag Manual, produced by the UN and funded by the Caribbean Tourism Project Unit and the European Union, is available online.

In Canada, Toronto-based Environmental Defence administers the Blue Flag program ([www.blueflag.ca](http://www.blueflag.ca)) which falls neatly within its mission statement: “Environmental Defence protects the environment and human health. We research. We educate. We go to court when we have to. All in order to ensure clean air, safe food and thriving ecosystems. Nationwide.”

Says Environmental Defence spokesperson Jennifer Foulds: “In Canada, the Blue Flag program is young. We've started with beaches in Ontario, focusing on those beaches that have applied to be certified. We are working on getting more beaches in Ontario certified, as well as beaches across Canada, including P.E.I.”

This year, the City of Toronto's Cherry Beach, Hanlan's Point Beach, Ward's Island Beach, Woodbine Beaches, Centre Island Beach, Gibraltar Point Beach; and South Bruce Peninsula's Sauble Beach, Kincardine's Station Beach and Wasaga Beach Provincial Park's Wasaga Beach received Blue Flags. And Goderich's Rotary Cove Beach, Sarnia's Canatara Park Beach, Central Elgin's Main Beach and Blue Mountains' Northwinds Park and Little River Beach Park are candidates.

Local, national and international beach rating systems abound. Among them, the U.S. Clean Beaches Council operates the Blue Wave Campaign ([www.cleanbeaches.org](http://www.cleanbeaches.org)) and the European Commission has its own beach-rating system with colour-coded maps and charts for thousands of EU beaches. ([http://ec.europa.eu/water/water-bathing/report\\_2007.html](http://ec.europa.eu/water/water-bathing/report_2007.html)).

*Donna Jacobs is Diplomat's associate publisher.*

### BLUE FLAGS AROUND

Information on Blue Flag-awarded sites is updated each year on June 5 for Europe, Canada, Morocco and new countries nearby. Updates for the Caribbean, New Zealand, South Africa and other new countries come in November. Here's the list for 2007, so far.

Country	Beaches	Marinas
Bahamas	0	2
Belgium	5	7
Bulgaria	10	1
Canada	9	0
Croatia	117	20
Cyprus	52	0
Denmark	205	76
Dominican Republic	1	0
Estonia	1	3
England and N. Ireland	93	5
Finland	6	26
France	238	69
French Departments and Territories	14	3
Germany	34	127
Greece	430	9
Iceland	2	3
Ireland	81	3
Italy	218	54
Jamaica	2	1
Latvia	8	1
Lithuania	6	1
Montenegro	20	0
Morocco	10	0
Netherlands	44	47
New Zealand	0	1
Norway	0	5
Poland	8	5
Portugal	189	12
Puerto Rico	4	0
Romania	7	1
Russia	0	1
Scotland	7	1
Slovenia	8	2
South Africa	20	0
Spain	499	77
Sweden	45	58
Turkey	235	14
Wales	44	5



Opposite: Photographer Mikel Flamm, who is based in Bangkok but shoots for the United Nations, Save the Children, and World Vision International, says this group of children, from a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, followed him the whole time he was on assignment there.

# Global Poverty: A progress report

Economic growth has lifted millions of people – more than 1.5 million a month – out of abject poverty in the last 15 years. With the pace of this advance accelerating, the UN expects to meet its basic war-on-poverty goals by 2015. Yet, more than one billion people still exist on less than \$1 a day. The most important fix that remains? Good government, writes **Don Cayo**.

**I**n the time it takes you to read this paragraph, the population of the world will grow by about 40 people. Almost all of the net gain is concentrated in the poorest parts of the planet – the very places that are least able to offer their citizens a realistic chance of working their way up the economic ladder. Yet, in the same few seconds, the number who remain stranded on the very bottom rung will drop by 10 or more.

Indeed, the worst manifestations of mass poverty have been shrinking in many countries for 15 years, and the pace of this improvement has steadily grown faster. It works out to an average of a million and a half people a month who have moved above the \$1-a-day bar that marks the worst misery. By 2004, the latest year for which data are available, the number left behind had dwindled, for the first time in a generation, to just under a billion even though the world has more people.

If global trade and sensible aid continue apace, there is every reason to hope and expect that hundreds of millions more people in scores of countries will similarly improve their lot over the next few years. If they do, the world may very well meet at least one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015 – to reduce by half the proportion of people who were living on less than \$1 a day in 1990.

Of course, \$1 a day is a dismally low measure of success. And if you raise your sights to just \$2 a day, still a paltry sum, the results are mixed. The good news is that the proportion who fall below this level is down from half the people on earth in 1990 to about 40 per cent in 2004.

The not-so-good news is that the absolute number of people who live in such penury has not changed at all. It is stuck at 2.6 billion.

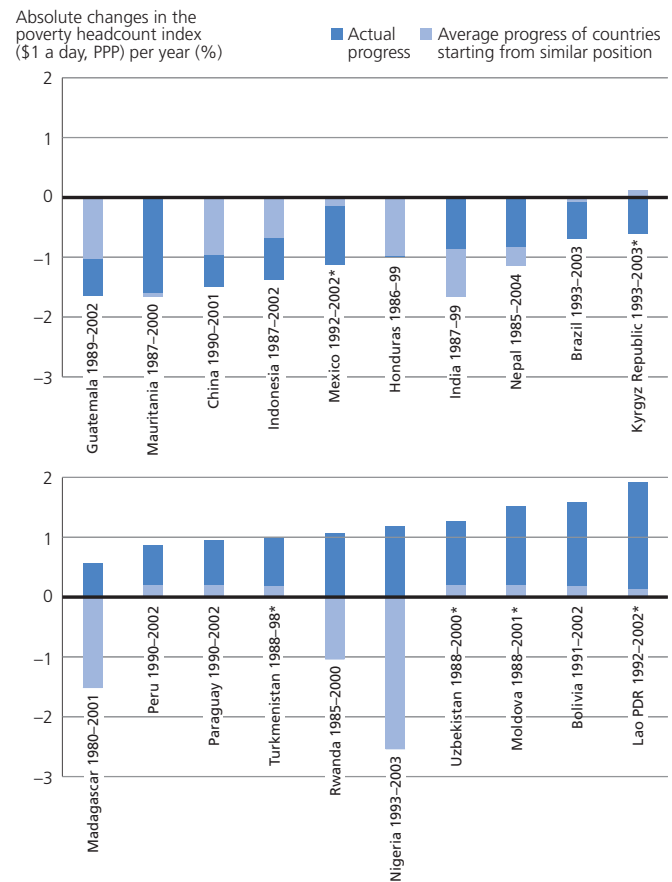
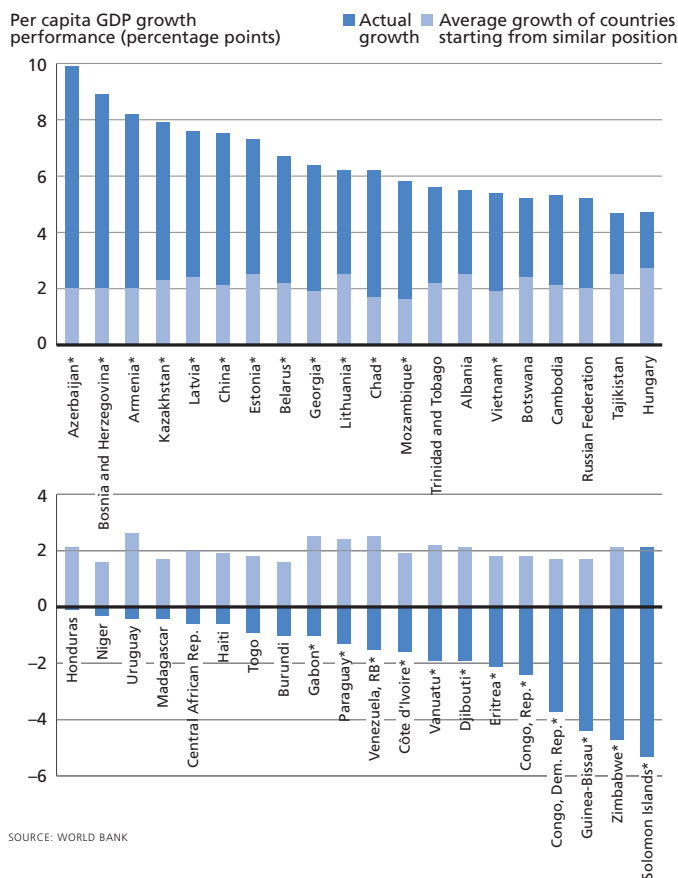
The progress in easing mass poverty has been driven by the huge strides in China, where hundreds of millions have been able to better themselves, many of them substantially, in the last 15 years. Indeed, thanks to this powerful economic engine, the \$1-a-day average for the whole of East Asia is down to just nine per cent, less than a third of what it was just 15 years ago, a little less than half of the global average today. But most other developing countries are also integrating into the global economy, and their growth in GDP per capita has averaged a healthy 3.9 per cent every year since 2000.

The growth of poor countries' economies and the easing of mass poverty do not quite move in lock-step, however. In some countries the relationship is skewed by growing disparities in the way the new wealth is getting distributed. In only 13 of the world's poorest countries are income inequalities on the wane, according to World Bank figures released this spring. The split is getting worse in 46 countries.

An ever-larger gap between the rich and the poor sounds serious and it is. Yet this is neither quite as bad nor as simple as it might seem. When you drill down into the numbers, you find a paradox – a little bit of bad news in countries where the rich-poor gap is narrowing, and quite a bit of good news in those where the gap is getting wider. The more complete story is that in three of the 13 gap-narrowing countries, the driving factor has been a negative one – everybody's income is going down, and the poor are losing out faster than the rich. And in 26 of the gap-widening countries, the rich may indeed be getting richer at a faster pace than the poor, but every income level is coming out ahead.

John Richards, a professor of public policy at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, sees a historical pattern in the way these rising incomes are being distributed.

"The same thing happened in 19th-century Europe," he noted in an interview. "The gap widened there, too, as the economy grew. So I'm not overly worried to see it happening again as long as the governments are using some of their



SOURCE: WORLD BANK





MIKEL FLAMM

These women are part of a savings group in Dhaka. Such groups enable the ladies to save as a collective, putting small amounts of money into a fund from which they can later borrow.



MIKEL FLAMM

Sixteen-year-old Shuli Begum, holding on to her six-month-old son Shofiq, lives on \$1.25-\$1.40 a day, her husband's earnings from rickshaw driving. Although extremely poor, they have three meals a day – mostly rice, vegetables and small pieces of fish.

growing wealth to provide basic health and education services, and as long as there is some growth in the incomes of the poor.”

The World Bank’s figures do not record how much various countries are spending on health or education, but they do track some numbers that are much more important – the outcomes, like infant and child mortality. These figures are typical of the good-news, bad-news mes-

sage in most of these stats.

The rate at which children die is, thankfully, down in every region of the world. But the progress is slow. Child mortality in a handful of countries – in East Timor, Bhutan, Guinea, Mozambique and Laos, to name the five that trail the pack – has actually worsened in recent years. And about 10 million children under five years of age still die every year in developing parts of the world. Only 35

countries are on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal of cutting child deaths by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. And progress is slowest in the very countries where the problem has historically been the worst, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa where HIV-AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases continue to take a huge toll.

The results are just as mixed when it comes to education. The percentage of children of relevant age who are able to complete primary school in developing countries has increased from 62 per cent 10 years ago to 72 per cent – a big gain. But even this brisk rate of progress will not be enough in sub-Saharan Africa or in South Asia to meet the goal of, by 2015, ensuring that every child is able to complete primary school. And the goal of gender parity – equal opportunities and outcomes for girls and boys – is still only a dream.

Nor is it enough to just drop fees and open the school doors to all comers. That is what several countries of eastern Africa, among other places, have done in recent years. When I visited Tanzania and Kenya last year I saw some of the results. They were not pretty. In many, many schools ill-trained teachers were struggling to cope with classes of up to 120 students who were shoe-horned into classrooms with no equipment, no books and sometimes no furniture, windows or doors. The governments themselves as well as aid agencies such as the Aga Khan Development Foundation are struggling to change this, but progress is slow. In such circumstances it would be naïve to expect the quality of education that many poor children are getting to be acceptable, let alone high.

Dr. Richards notes that the provision of both health care and decent schools depends not only on money, but also to a great degree on the quality of governance. He says this latter area needs to be the target of a lot of development effort to ensure that all people benefit not only in income, but also in services, as a poor country gains more wealth.

His colleague, Aidan Vining, agrees. The growth rate for upper incomes doesn’t matter, he said, as long as the poor can see their own lives getting better, too.

“It makes the difference between going out and working hard, and staying home and plotting the revolution,” he says.

Don Cayo is a Vancouver Sun columnist. Email [doncayo@telus.net](mailto:doncayo@telus.net) to reach him.

## African History in Pop Culture Bites

Some recent books on the too-often ignored continent probe deeper and are worth consideration, writes George Fetherling.

Only rarely does a book about sub-Saharan Africa concentrate the attention of North American readers. The last conspicuous exception was *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Romeo Dallaire's chilling memoir of his failure as a UN peacekeeper in Rwanda. Only occasionally does a book about Africa get even a brief moment in the sun, as with *28: Stories of AIDS in Africa* (Knopf Canada) by Stephanie Nolen, who covers the entire continent so well for the *Globe and Mail*.

The difficulty arises partly from a cultural agenda that is too often the result of American pre-occupations and prejudices. The entire area south of North Africa and north of South Africa is practically the only large piece of real estate the United States has never contested (and only supplies with arms now and then). Making mischief in the heart of Africa has traditionally been the preserve of France and, to a lesser extent, Belgium. A bigger reason is that until the present energy crisis, the United States believed there was nothing there worth stealing. So most North Americans still draw their perceptions about Africa from fragments of old pop culture, as shown in these notes about new books on Africa—Saharan, Sub-Saharan and South.

Who could forget, try as we might, Charlton Heston as General (and Reverend) Charles (Chinese) Gordon, the Victorian governor general of the Sudan, and Laurence Olivier as his nemesis, Mohammed Ahmed (the Mahdi or "Expected One") in the 1966 film *Khartoum*? Gen. Gordon, already a popular hero in Victorian Britain, became the colonial ruler of Egypt, and in 1885 was besieged by the forces of the charismatic Muslim nationalist (the Mahdi is still revered by some Shiites – hence the Mahdi Army that now pops up in the news). Britain sent a relief expedition but Gen. Gordon was killed by the insurgents before help arrived, becoming a martyr to colonialism. His tomb is one of the most conspicuous in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

In *Three Empires of the Nile: The Victorian Jihad, 1869-1899* (Simon & Schuster Canada), Dominic Green re-examines these events in light of the present mess



For an understanding of how the First World War changed Africa, many of us have depended on Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn's turn in *The Africa Queen*, the 1951 John Huston film.

in the Middle East. By interpreting the Mahdi's messianic vision as the quest for the world's first modern Islamic nation-state, he can also treat it as the opening of a story whose conclusion is nowhere in sight. The thesis is constructed from sets of innate tensions – between one sect and another, between one religion and another, between what might be called one truth-system and another (for we need a sharper term than "culture"). The ten-

dency in such books is to oversell the historical parallels, as so many writers have done in drawing comparisons between the Iraq and Vietnam wars. Mr. Green avoids this trap without building a wall between ourselves and the times he writes about.

For an understanding of how the First World War changed Africa, most of us are dependent on Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn in *The Africa Queen*,



Laurence Olivier as the Mahdi in the 1966 film *Khartoum*.



A young Michael Caine, shown here circa 1974, played against type as an upper-class army officer in *Zulu*.

John Huston's 1951 film based on the short novel by C.S. Forester, the author of the Captain Hornblower books. A reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* recently suggested that people who have watched the movie "will have got the gist of" the African theatre of operations in that war. What he meant, I believe, was that the colonial powers – Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, the Netherlands and Germany (but not the U.S.) – saw the war in Africa as not only separate from but fundamentally different from the fighting in Europe, because it was an excuse to grab one another's colonies, using African labour to do so. The review concerned Edward Paice's book *Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (McArthur & Co).

Germany had extensive colonies there in the first decade of the 20th century from South-West Africa to Cameroon to East Africa. The last of these is seen as important in the story of Germany's war for two reasons. One is that many military and commercial records ended up in archives in Kenya, whereas those from some of the other regions were housed in Germany and were destroyed in the Second World War. The other reason is that the conflict in Kenya threw up some famous or infamous individuals, including the German commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who is recalled as an innovative guerrilla fighter, as well as a hideous butcher. Mr. Paice's book is strong on military history, weak on politics. Perhaps the politics are too obvious to warrant much discussion. Germany was forced to cede its colonies under the Treaty of Versailles, a fact that contributed to the feelings of powerlessness and despair which the Nazi Party manipulated later on.

Another of our collective images of Africa is Spencer Tracy as Henry Morton Stanley searching for the Scottish missionary David Livingstone (Cecil Hardwicke) in the 1939 Hollywood film *Stanley and Livingstone*. Of the two, Stanley is the one who fascinates people. He may have died (in 1904) as a knight, but Sir Henry was a Welsh orphan born John Rowlands who made his way to America, fought on both sides in the Civil War and then fell in with James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, one of the great brow-lowering institutions of 19th-century America. Dr. Livingstone, a respected clerical figure but hardly famous, had been out of touch with the Outside but was not exactly lost or even missing. Nonetheless, Mr. Stanley, on as-

signment from Mr. Bennett, managed to locate him right where he was supposed to be, in the Congo. "Dr. Livingstone, I presume," he said, famously, and whipped the event into a supposed scoop that is still considered one of the great journalistic feats of the age.

Mr. Stanley was a dislikeable character who has become even more so with time. In 1989, the broad public began to get the picture with Adam Hochschild's best-seller *King Leopold's Ghost*, which spread the story of Mr. Stanley's role in establishing the cruellest form of slavery in what was then the Belgian Congo, a sickening mess that led Joseph Conrad to write *Heart of Darkness*. A decade later came the first volume of Frank McLynn's vilifying biography of Mr. Stanley. The revisionist backlash surfaced this year with *Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer* by Tim Jeal (HarperCollins Canada). The subtitle says it all: Mr. Stanley may have enslaved a whole society and stolen an entire country's land but he did follow the Congo River all way to the Atlantic, which only black people had done previously.

Another perspective than Mr. Jeal's book is found in "*Dr. Livingstone, I Presume*": *Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers and Empire* by Clare Pettitt (Harvard University Press). This is a short beautifully researched work that looks at how, through the agency of popular culture, the Stanley-Livingstone myth shaped the West's ideas about Africa and about the Other, and even contributed to misunderstandings between Christianity and Islam.

The young Michael Caine played against type in *Zulu*, the 1964 film in which he was a decidedly upper-class army officer. The film, not to be confused with *Zulu Dawn* (1979), recreated a famed incident in the Zulu War of 1879 in which a few Welsh regulars fended off a great Zulu army at Rorke's Drift, a sheep station in the Transvaal. But once again the pop culture delivers only drama and action without explaining how events happened and why. The point can be illustrated by watching the Michael Caine film while also reading *Someone Has Blundered: Calamities of the British Army in the Victorian Age* by Dennis Judd (McArthur & Co.), which contains a remarkable account of a far larger Zulu episode of which Britain has much less reason to be proud.

George Fetherling's most recent book is *Tales of Two Cities: A Novella Plus Stories* (Subway Books).

# What the decision-makers are reading

Peter MacKay. Bev Oda. Elizabeth May. Russell Mills. Paul Heinbecker.

by George Abraham

From the latest incarnation of Harry Potter to the inside account of how the Bush administration brought the Iraqi house down upon itself, Canada's opinion-shapers have lined up a balanced diet of fiction and non-fiction to read this summer. Interestingly, their selection is as varied as their credentials and backgrounds except for Foreign Minister Peter McKay and his former deputy minister, Peter Harder, who want to revisit U.S. President Richard Nixon's groundbreaking visit to China through the eyes of a Canadian historian.



**Foreign Minister Peter MacKay:** This summer I will be reading Canada's internationally recognized historian Margaret MacMillan's newest book, *Nixon in China*. The book discusses Mr. Nixon's official visit to China in 1972. The importance of the relationship between China and the West is of great interest to me. Having recently returned from my first official visit to China, I am looking forward to learning more about President Nixon's historic trip and the preparations for his important bilateral discussions with Chinese communist leaders. After reading just a few pages, I recalled a conversation on this topic with former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during a private lunch we had earlier this year, and so I have just sent him a copy of Dr. MacMillan's book.

**Bev Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women:** I rarely have the time to read novels but I am planning on reading *A Complicated Kindness*. Miriam

Toews is a talented Canadian writer who writes with a great sense of humour. Her background in film studies and journalism brings richness and uniqueness to her writing. The themes touched by Ms. Toews in this book are universal and I was told that readers who grew up in a small community and subsequently moved to a large city will be able to relate to the longing expressed by the protagonist to leave rural roots for the big city life. As well, people who have spent life in a big city will be compelled to read this book because it affords them an opportunity to experience life in a small religious community that otherwise they would not be able to. Finally, this novel is also the critically acclaimed 2004 winner of the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction and a Giller Prize Finalist and I am looking forward to reading it.

**Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party:** I shouldn't admit to wanting to read political books, but that's my top "must read" list. I plan to read Chantal Hebert's book, *French Kiss*, twice. First I will read it in English and then I will read it in French. This will be important for more than political reasons. Firstly, in my opinion, Ms. Hebert is Canada's premier political commentator. She is smart, blunt, and sees things that everyone else misses. The Harper-Quebec courtship is one I want to study to know better how to send Quebecers running into the arms of the Green Party. Secondly, reading it first in English and then in French will help my French-language training and introduce me to great new political idioms (not "new" to the world; new to me!) Then I want to do the same thing in reading Linda Deibel's new book on Stéphane Dion: *Against the Current*. I am impressed with Mr. Dion and have liked Linda's journalism over the years, so it should be a good read in both official languages. Of course, the book that I await with bated breath is the seventh and last of the Harry Potter books. July 21st seems a long way away.

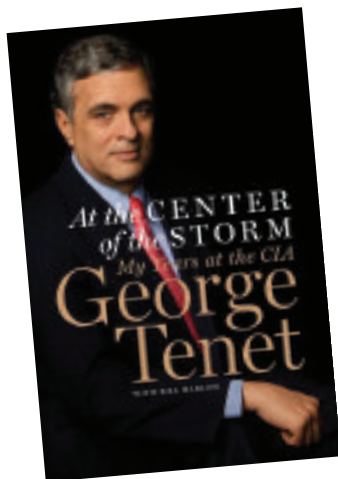
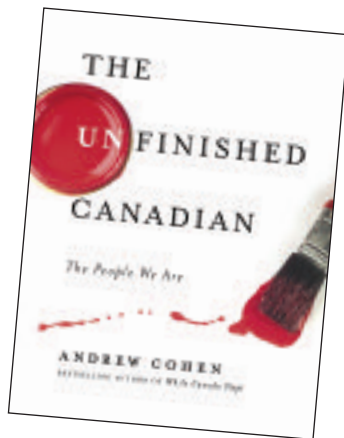
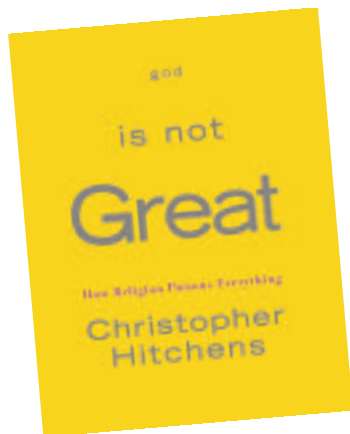
**Arif Lalani, Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan:** In addition to reading the

latest on Afghanistan, I am reading *The Wisdom of Crowds* by James Surowiecki. (This book uses) economics theory to explain how separate decisions by large groups of people often result in better decision-making than would have been possible by a small elite. In short, it is collective decision-making through individual decision-makers. For example, the stock market is a group of individuals taking decisions to buy and sell in their own interests, yet they generally end up with a good result. The book also explains why groups sometimes go astray. It has implications for the way we manage complex issues and simple ones. And, I am also re-reading the works of Mawlana Jalal-ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi, known in the West as "Rumi". I have read his works for most of my adult life. My first posting was to Turkey where Rumi is buried; and now I'm in Afghanistan, which contains the city where he was born, Balkh. You need to find ways to give yourself a break every once in a while down here.



**Russell Mills, chairman of the National Capital Commission (NCC):** I plan to read Christopher Hitchens' new book *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. Mr. Hitchens is one of the most provocative journalists writing today. The reviews and excerpts I have read indicate that this book will be no exception to his combative style. The criticisms of the book by religious leaders that I have read have been unconvincing. I am looking forward to reading Mr. Hitchens' argument in depth.

**Paul Heinbecker, former ambassador to the UN:** With a little luck and a lot more discipline than I have manifested so far, I am not going to be reading a book at all this summer; I am going to be writing one. To the extent I do find time to read, my choices will include George Tenet's *At the Centre of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Andrew Cohen's *The Unfinished Canadian* and Paul Kennedy's *The Parliament of Man*. I will read Mr. Tenet because there are still gaps in my understanding of why the Bush administration made the greatest foreign policy blunder in American



history and brought a world of hurt down on Americans' heads. Maybe Mr. Tenet will provide some answers. I will read the Cohen book for the sheer pleasure of it, especially if the chapter on Ottawa is representative of the rest. And as for Kennedy, noblesse (or an overdeveloped sense of duty) oblige.



**Helena Guergis, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Sport):** Having recently visited Afghanistan, I was touched by the plight and strength of Afghan women. Many of those I met with told me of their struggle under the Taliban regime and how they value the presence of Canada and our allies. This summer I will read *My Forbidden Face* by Latifa, a young woman who wrote a personal account of life under the Taliban. She writes about how they made her a prisoner in her own home and took away her basic freedoms. It is the story of a woman who had to hide herself or be whipped or stoned for daring to show her face. Latifa's account will help me better understand what so many other Afghan women endured while their country fell apart, in the name of a fanaticism, terror and oppression. Despite its serious undertones, this book will highlight for me the progress made by countries like Canada who are there on the ground helping to rebuild Afghanistan.



**Clare Cary, wife of British High Commissioner Anthony Cary:** This summer will be our first in Canada. Instead of renting a house in France or Italy, we shall be taking to the road with kayaks, bikes and tent and exploring southern Quebec and the Maritimes. When we run out of conversation, I will pick up Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*, a modern take on the legend of Odysseus from his wife's point-of-view. In September, Atwood's stage adaptation - a joint NAC English Theatre Company production in association with the UK's Royal Shakespeare Company - will premiere in Ottawa. During our travels I will also be exploring second-hand bookshops, in the hope of replacing the four missing volumes in my 1950s hardback edition of the Anne of Green Gables series.

**Peter Harder, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (now senior policy advisor at Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP):** My summer book list includes *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* by Robert Dallek. This is the latest book from one of the most prominent American historians of our time. His earlier works include two of my favourites, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* and *Flawed Giant: Lyndon B. Johnson and His Times, 1961-73*. I expect that in this latest volume, Dallek will again use his considerable research skills to bring to light materials from recently declassified archives. The characters, Nixon and Kissinger, remain central to our understanding of post-war American foreign policy and the exercise of power. The recent release of Margaret MacMillan's brilliant history, *Nixon in China*, stimulated my interest in this period of history. I was delighted when I recently returned from a business trip and on my table was Dallek's latest. A wonderful gift from my wife for summertime reading.

George Abraham is Diplomat's contributing editor.

# Combining cultures in the house that Bronson built

By Margo Roston



DYANNE WILSON

Japanese Ambassador Tsuneo Nishida sits with his wife Keiko in the bright sunroom – his favourite spot in their expansive Rockcliffe residence.

Japan's Ambassador Tsuneo Nishida and his wife Keiko have been in Ottawa only a few months, but they are already happily ensconced in their elegant home, one of the most impressive heritage houses in the capital.

Waterstone, their limestone mansion at 725 Acacia Ave., is one of the most admired estates in town. Fred E. Bronson laid its foundation in 1927. The wealthy president of the Bronson Company and chairman of the Federal District Commission – the forerunner of the National Capital Commission – was the grandson of Henry Franklin Bronson, one of the area's most successful lumber barons. As noted in Martha Edmond's book, *Rockcliffe*

*Park: a History of the Village*, Fred Bronson hired one of the town's most successful architects, Allan Keefer, to create his masterpiece on a five-acre lot above the Ottawa River site of the Bronson and Weston piling ground, once covered with stacks of drying lumber. The name Waterstone comes from the exterior limestone chosen by Mr. Keefer which came from a water-filled quarry on Montreal Road.

Designed in the Tudor Revival style so popular between the World Wars, the house was completed in 1930.

Mr. Bronson ordered Vermont slate for the roof and planted 500 cedar trees, lilacs, hydrangeas, and 25 varieties of roses on the expansive grounds.

The lilacs still linger, in full bloom in the spring, but the grounds are smaller as some of the property was severed when the estate was sold to the Japanese government in 1958.

Today, the home's interior is as glorious as it was in its earliest days. The elegance of architect Keefer's most sublime work immediately strikes the eye at the entrance. Nothing as simple as a front door faces the expansive lawn and gardens. Guests arrive instead at the north-facing main entrance, under a port-cochere, over which hangs a carving of a 16-petalled chrysanthemum, the symbol of the Japanese royal family.

The foyer is a formal room with a fireplace and pegged, warm, wide, floor-



DYANNE WILSON

Waterstone is one of the city's most admired estates.



DYANNE WILSON

The garden in May.

boards that extend the length of the house.

The living room is a vast space dominated by the fireplace and fine woodwork and decorated in cream and gold. Striking Japanese works of art, re-arranged by the Nishidas when they first arrived, line the walls.

The next room is the wood panelled library or Blue Room, as it is called, with its intricately wood-carved ceiling detail.

"I can just see the men gathering here for after-dinner drinks and cigars," says Ambassador Nishida with a smile. Three large niches in the wood paneling hold beautiful examples of Japanese porcelain. Here, they've removed a likely a holdover from previous ambassador

Sadaaki Numata's tenure: The karaoke machine. Mr. Numata was known for starting sing-alongs after dinner.

A student of interior design, Mrs. Nishida admits the house is a bit too classical for her taste, and the twinkle in her eye says a few modern touches are on the way.

The ambassador, formerly Japan's deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, says his favourite spot in his new home is the bright sunroom at its south-end. Filled with white wicker furniture, it opens onto a large stone patio. Here, they serve ice-filled glasses containing five bright red cherries garnished with a sprig of fresh mint, and a cup of green tea. Under each glass is a small, colourful square of chiyogami paper, which the ambassador's wife deftly turns into a tiny origami crane. Chef Kinsui Sekine, who recently arrived from the well-known Chinzan-so restaurant in Tokyo, prepared the charming tea. He is one of five staff members, including a gardener and a butler, who are employed to keep the 30-something-room mansion and gardens in perfect heritage shape.

Mrs. Nishida hopes one day to combine traditions by holding a Japanese tea ceremony on the grounds of her very Canadian residence.

Margo Roston is *Diplomat's* culture editor.



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## Sensational salads

**A**nyone can make a good salad. The two principle ingredients for success are a basic instinct about what ingredients will go well together and an excellent vinaigrette or dressing.

Without a doubt, salads are consistently the most refreshing part of a menu. Most frequently at a formal dinner party, a simple salad is served just after main course, although it can also be served just before. If I am not serving a salad as part of the meal, it is certain to appear with the appetizer or even as a main course accompaniment. Appetizer salads at our table might include breaded scallop salad, a teased catfish salad,

COOKED RICE, PASTA, LENTILS,  
POTATOES, KASHA AND  
BUCKWHEAT GROUTS ARE THE BASIS  
FOR EXCELLENT SALADS WHICH CAN  
ALSO SERVE AS MAIN COURSE  
ACCOMPANIMENTS – PARTICULARLY  
FOR BUFFETS, BARBECUES AND  
AL FRESCO EVENTS.

smoked salmon stacks, prosciutto-wrapped wasabi pears (see March-April 2007 of this publication) and the list goes on.

Cooked rice, pasta, lentils, potatoes, kasha and buckwheat grouts are the basis for excellent salads which can also serve as main course accompaniments – particularly for buffets, barbecues and al fresco events. For example, cooked rice tossed with ground cumin, chopped garlic and an olive oil-mayonnaise dressing becomes a huge hit when you add fresh blueberries or pomegranate seeds, chopped fresh parsley, toasted slivered almonds and a vinaigrette drizzle to it. Kasha tossed with nutmeg, julienne-cut sundried tomato in seasoned oil, sliced mushrooms, chopped nuts and a mayonnaise-based sauce, offer an unexpected



MARGARET  
DICKENSON

but amazing taste experience. And standard tabbouleh makes a fitting accompaniment for grilled meat, fish or chicken when you add sliced heart of palm, chopped garlic, crumbled feta cheese and a generous dose of roasted pine nuts to it.

When it comes to salads, you can achieve an element of surprise by experimenting with innovative combinations. Match sticks of fresh celery root studded with chopped chives (or green onions) and currants and then sprinkled with a mustard herb vinaigrette, is a dramatic example of making the ordinary, extraordinary. Of course, fruit combinations are limitless. Persimmon, Belgian endive, feta cheese and fresh rosemary, moistened with a mustard herb vinaigrette, result in an unusual marriage of ingredients that works well. For an off-the-wall success story, combine chickpeas (canned, will

do) with cumin seeds, chopped dates and an orange peel dressing.

To create new salads or reinvent the familiar ones, additions of fresh herbs, cheese and nuts will significantly enhance the salad's culinary dimension without much effort. Take for instance my Cranberry Melon Salad. It is a handy solution when you're pressed for time. Imagine cubes of succulent honeydew melon tossed with slightly tart dried cranberries and anointed in a sweetly mellow herb vinaigrette. This refreshing crescendo of unique flavours, textures, colours and shapes, is an ideal choice for all-year round entertaining – and might prove to be a perfect no time, no talent recipe for that summer barbecue, or a Thanksgiving and holiday season menu.

Be inspired. Bon Appétit!

Margaret Dickenson is author of the internationally acclaimed book *Margaret's Table – Easy Cooking and Inspiring Entertaining* ([www.margaretssenseofoccasion.com](http://www.margaretssenseofoccasion.com)).



LARRY DICKENSON



**Cranberry Melon Salad**

*Makes 4 servings*

- 14 oz (400 g)\* honeydew melon flesh, cut into cubes (1/2 inch or 1.25 cm)
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) dried cranberries
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) vinaigrette, a mustard herb type (recipe follows, or commercial)
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) pistachio nuts, lightly roasted
- 2 oz (60 g) Parmesan cheese (block piece)
- Garnish (Optional)
- 4 sprigs of fresh mint

1. Chill melon cubes.
2. Just before serving, drain off and discard any juice from melon cubes.
3. Combine melon cubes with cranberries, drizzle with vinaigrette and toss gently.
4. Transfer salad to serving plates or platter. Sprinkle with pistachio nuts. Garnish with thick curls of Parmesan cheese and sprigs of fresh mint.
5. Serve immediately to ensure crispness of melon.

\* Note: This weight does not include the discarded peel, seeds, cavity water and soft pulp.

**DO AHEAD TIP:** Cut the melon into cubes up to several hours in advance and store them refrigerated in an airtight plastic container.

**Mustard Herb Vinaigrette**

*Makes 1 1/2 cups or 375 mL*

- 3/4 cup (180 mL) canola or corn oil
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) olive oil
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) vinegar
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) lemon juice
- 1 1/3 tbsp (20 mL) granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh dill weed
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) powdered mustard
- 1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) finely chopped fresh garlic
- 1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) salt
- 1 tsp (5 mL) crushed black peppercorns

1. In a medium size bowl, whisk ingredients together.
2. Pour vinaigrette into well-sealed glass jars and store refrigerated for up to several months.
3. Stir well before using.

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## Thirst-quenching Sauvignon Blanc for summer

**A**s the weather warms up, our tastes in wine seem to change. Rather than seeking the warmth of big, rich reds, our bodies start craving refreshing whites to quench our thirst. For me, refreshing generally means Sauvignon Blanc. It's the pinnacle of patio wines.

Sauvignon Blanc is the wine equivalent of lemonade on a hot summer day. One would not usually associate a classic variety with lemonade, but Sauvignon Blanc, in addition to its noble styles – such as when it is blended with Semillon in Bordeaux or on its own from the best soils of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fume in the Loire Valley – produces a multitude of delicious, easy-drinking versions that make it one of the world's great values as well.

There is a freshness to Sauvignon Blanc, which offers a crisp finish, bringing out flavours of tart grapefruit, lemon, or lime due to its high natural acidity. Other aromas and flavours associated with the grape are: fresh-cut grass, green peas, aromatic herbs, gun flint and tropical fruits such as mango and papaya. The lighter examples pair well with shellfish ceviches, pea soup



STEPHEN BECKTA

PHOTO: PAUL COUVRETTE

or fresh goat cheese.

Sauvignon Blanc is also known as Fumé Blanc in California and some parts of Australia when an oak element is added to the wine. Robert Mondavi coined the phrase in the 1960s in California and he still produces one of the best oak-aged examples available. The oak imparts a toasty quality, the warmer climate lowers the acidity and offers riper fruit flavours for those who prefer a richer, fuller wine. Fumé Blancs pair well with richer fish dishes such as grilled striped bass, poached salmon or spicy Pad Thai.

Although France is definitely the birthplace of Sauvignon Blanc, New Zealand has given the grape its latest stardom. Because of its cool climate, the kiwi winemakers really had to focus on a grape that would do well year in and year out. The style is usually a zippy, asparagus and grapefruit version with some richness

and a little residual sugar. Their most famous estate, Cloudy Bay, was recently purchased by LVMH luxury brands from France. Shows the French can appreciate good wine wherever it grows.

So rather than asking for a bland glass of Pinot Grigio this patio season, try some Sauvignon Blanc.

Here are some of my favorites currently available in Ontario:

**Peninsula Ridge "Wismer Vineyard", Niagara, 2006, \$19 (Available at the winery only)**

**Robert Mondavi "Fumé Blanc" Napa Valley 2005 \$25 (Vintages)**

**Sacred Hill, Marlborough, New Zealand 2006 \$15 (LCBO)**

**Sancerre, Cherrier Pere & Fils, Loire Valley 2005 \$25 (Hobbs and Co.)**

Cheers!

*Stephen Beckta is owner and sommelier at Beckta dining & wine.*

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# Canada's musical ambassador to Europe

By Betty Nygaard King

The time was June 1948; the setting, a luncheon in London, England. Present were the movers and shakers of music in England, including composers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten, and tenor Peter Pears. Canada's own Alexander Brott attended as a guest. The Montreal-born musician, there as unofficial Canadian musical ambassador, was embarking on a daring venture. In a few days, he was to become the first Canadian conductor to tour Europe performing Canadian compositions. It was a time when Canadian musicians rarely performed abroad; Canadian music was so little known that a UK music publisher introduced Mr. Brott as "a composer from one of our more intelligent dominions." Such remarks only encouraged the visionary musician in his mission to establish a Canadian musical presence.

THE USSR BECKONED IN 1962 THROUGH A CULTURAL EXCHANGE; MR. BROTT BECAME THE FIRST CANADIAN TO CONDUCT HIS OWN COMPOSITIONS THERE. WHEN THE SOVIET TRANSLATORS TOOK THE LIBERTY OF RENAMING ONE OF HIS PIECES *SPUTNIKS IN ORBIT*, MR. BROTT GENEROUSLY OVERLOOKED THE TRANSGRESSION.

Mr. Brott was well-established as a violinist, composer and conductor in Canada and the U.S. when he identified Europe as his next challenge. At his own expense (there was no Canada Council, no grants for foreign tours), Mr. Brott sailed across the Atlantic for a summer of performing violin sonatas and conducting, organized through the CBC International Service

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and heavy recordings and scores of Canadian compositions. He conducted these works for concerts and radio broadcasts in England, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Italy. As Mr. Brott noted later in his memoirs, "Being a Canadian cultural ambassador was heavy work, but it was worth the effort."

In one short summer, he gave several European premieres of Canadian compositions, including his own *From Sea to Sea*, an orchestral portrait of the Canadian landscape. He became the first Canadian to conduct the Stockholm Orchestra and may have been the first Canadian to perform into a war-era microphone engraved with the Nazi swastika.

Alexander Brott's groundbreaking experiences were so successful he returned to the continent as conductor, violinist and composer annually for decades. By 1959, he was invited to Israel, where he was transported by military jeep before conducting the Kol Israel Orchestra. The USSR beckoned in 1962 through a cultural exchange; Mr. Brott became the first Canadian to conduct his own compositions there. When the Soviet translators took the liberty of renaming one of his pieces *Sputniks in Orbit*, Mr. Brott generously overlooked the transgression. He successfully premiered this and other Canadian works in Moscow's Hall of Columns, where the audience demanded eight curtain calls. Mr. Brott then met with Soviet composers to discuss electronic composition techniques, and donated Canadian works to their central music library. Even behind the Iron Curtain, he demonstrated music's power to overcome political and cultural differences.

Alexander Brott extended his reach as musical ambassador through the 1970s and 1980s, taking his McGill Chamber Orchestra to the USSR twice, the Far East, Mexico, South America, Bermuda and Eastern Europe. The orchestra was the

first Canadian classical ensemble to reach some of these locales. In each of the roughly 30 nations he visited, Mr. Brott's concerts showcased the talent of classical



Alexander Brott, 1915 – 2005

composers and performers. Through his foresight and dedication, he blazed trails for all Canadian performers who today enjoy international success.

Alexander Brott was born in Montreal in 1915. He died, age 90, in the city of his birth in 2005.

Betty Nygaard King is a subject editor with the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, and the author of *Alexander Brott: My Lives in Music*.

**DOLLCO NOTE:**

PLEASE PICK UP "ACCURATE" AD FROM

MARCH APRIL 2007

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**THIS PAGE** 1. British High Commissioner Anthony Cary and Supreme Court Justice Beverley McLachlin observe the sunset ceremony at the Earncliffe Summer Ball June 16. • 2. A few days after a big Europe Day celebration at the National Gallery, EU Ambassador Dorian Prince, left, performed a piano and organ recital at the First Baptist Church May 11. In addition to solo works on both instruments, he accompanied his long-time friend, soprano Margaret Lysak. Works ranged from the time of Bach to the 20th Century • 3. A Filipino ensemble performs at the Asian Heritage Month Gala at the Museum of Civilization April 28. • 4. WaterCan's honorary president Margaret Trudeau and her daughter-in-law Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau at the WaterCan Embassy Dinner at Aberdeen Pavilion May



**THIS PAGE** 1. Swiss Ambassador Werner Baumann hosted the annual Fête Champetre fundraiser for the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra this year. Left to right: OSO President Susan Annis, Fête Champetre Chair Norm LeCouvie of Sun Microsystems, with hosts, Susanna Baumann and the ambassador. • 2. Elzbieta Ficowska, a Holocaust survivor who was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto in 1942 as a six-month-old child, told the story of her rescuer, Irena Sendlerowa, a Polish social worker who saved 2,500 Jewish children, to Ashbury College students. From left are Polish Ambassador Piotr Ogradzinski; students Amanda Le and Alexander Polis; Tam Matthews, headmaster of Ashbury and Ms. Ficowska. • 3. Pieter van Vollenhoven, husband of Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, was in Ottawa May 17 to see the tulips and maintain links between Canada and his country. • 4. Performers wowed audiences with their traditional clothing at the Asian Heritage Month Gala at the Museum of Civilization April 28.

Nana Mouskouri spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa June 4 about her experiences as a UN goodwill ambassador.

**ALL CHILDREN ARE OUR CHILDREN**

Yannis Mourikis, who served as Greece's ambassador to Canada for three years, had already officially left his post in early June when his own country's Nana Mouskouri hit the stage at Southam Hall for her farewell tour "From Nana, with Love." But the ambassador, who had jetset home to Greece and was en route to his next posting at the United Nations, came back to Ottawa just to see the 72-year-old chanteuse.

"I went back to Ottawa to see her and admire her for one last time," the effusive ambassador said from New York in June.

"I saw her in '94 and she hasn't changed," he said. "Her voice is still crystal clear. And the moves – she was dancing and shaking her whole body. She must be really blessed by God."

The day after the concert, Ms. Mouskouri, who has been a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF since 1993, spoke at the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa. She spoke about how "all children are our children", and must be given a better future, said Steve Georgopoulos, co-chair of the event for Kiwanis.

Mr. Mourikis said he was sitting next to Ms. Mouskouri when she spoke and he could see her eyes well up as she talked "from the heart" about the children with whom UNICEF works. "I could tell that she really meant what she said. She has a great, great heart."

The \$50-a-plate luncheon raised more than \$9,000 to be used for UNICEF and Kiwanis projects. Sometimes the two groups work together as they did in 1994 when they took on a worldwide service project to eliminate Iodine Deficiency Disorders from the world.



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## New Heads of Mission

**Emilia María Alvarez Navarro**  
Ambassador of Costa Rica



Although she only formally joined the Costa Rican foreign service in 1990, Ms. Alvarez has worked for her country's foreign ministry for her entire career.

Her climb through the ranks has been impressive. She started with the ministry in 1969 as a secretary in the office of protocol. By 1973, she was first secretary of Costa Rica's embassy in Austria and alternate delegate to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and to the International Atomic Energy Agency. From 1975 to 1987, she headed up various sections including those dealing with foreign policy toward North and Central America. From 1987, she held a series of deputy director positions before being named director general of the foreign service division in 1996. In 1999, she became deputy director of the Costa Rican Foreign Service Institute "Manuel María Peralta," where she stayed until 2002 when she became chief of staff at the ministry of foreign affairs. From 2003 to 2005, she was director general of the foreign service division and then returned to the Costa Rican Foreign Service Institute as director.

Ms. Alvarez was born in Cartago City, Costa Rica and earned a bachelor's degree in English at the University of Costa Rica in 1976. She went on to specialize in linguistic studies at the same school. She also studied international affairs in Latin America at the University of Brasilia.

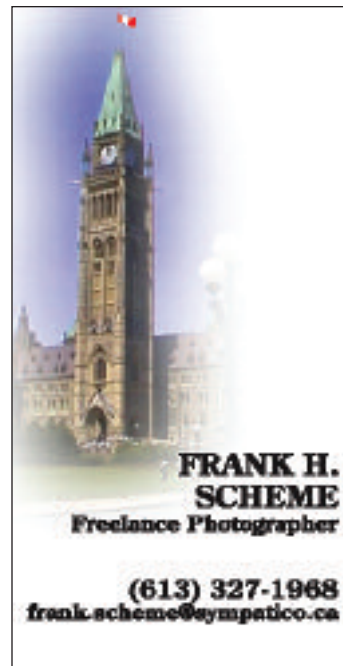
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246 Queen Street, Suite 400  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4  
TEL 563-4223 FAX 563-4962  
contact@afghanemb-canada.net  
www.afghanemb-canada.net

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Embassy of the Republic of Albania  
130 Albert Street, Suite 302  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL 236-4114 FAX 236-0804  
embassyofalbania@on.aibn.com

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Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
500 Wilbrod Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N2  
TEL 789-8505 FAX 789-1406  
www.embassyalgeria.ca/eng.htm

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Embassy of the Republic of Angola  
189 Laurier Avenue East  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6P1  
TEL 234-1152 FAX 234-1179  
info@embangola-can.org  
www.embangola-can.org

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Embassy of the Argentine Republic  
81 Metcalfe Street 7th Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6K7  
TEL 236-2351 FAX 235-2659  
embargentina@argentina-canada.net  
www.argentina-canada.net

**ARMENIA**

Mr. Arman Akopian  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Republic of Armenia  
7 Delaware Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0Z2  
TEL 234-3710 FAX 234-3444  
embottawa@rogers.com  
www.armembassycanada.ca

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His Ex. William Fisher  
Australian High Commission  
50 O'Connor, Suite 710  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2  
TEL 236-0841 FAX 236-4376  
www.canada.embassy.gov.au

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His Ex. Otto Ditz  
Embassy of the Republic of Austria  
445 Wilbrod Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M7  
TEL 789-1444 FAX 789-3431  
Ottawa-ob@bmeia.gov.at

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His Ex. Fakhraddin Gurbanov  
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
275 Slater Street, Suite 904-C  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9  
TEL 288-0497 FAX 230-8089

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High Commission for The Commonwealth of The Bahamas  
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1313  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2  
TEL 232-1724 FAX 232-0097  
ottawa-mission@bahighco.com

**BANGLADESH**

Mr. Syed Masud Mahmood  
Khundoker  
Acting High Commissioner  
High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
275 Bank Street, Suite 302  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2L6  
TEL 236-0138 FAX 567-3213  
bangla@rogers.com  
www.bdhc.org

**BARBADOS**

His Ex. Glynne Samuel Murray  
High Commission for Barbados  
55 Metcalfe St. #470  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6L5  
TEL 236-9517 FAX 230-4362  
ottawa@foreign.gov.bb

**BELARUS**

Her Ex. Nina Mazai  
Embassy of the Republic of Belarus  
130 Albert Street, Suite 600  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL 233-9994 FAX 233-8500  
belamb@igs.net

**BELGIUM**

His Ex. Jean Lint  
Embassy of Belgium  
360 Albert Street, Suite 820  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7  
TEL 236-7267 FAX 236-7882  
Ottawa@diplobe1.org  
www.diplomatie.be/ottawa

**BENIN**

Mrs. Awahou Labouda  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Republic of Benin

58 Glebe Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2C3  
TEL 233-4429 FAX 233-8952  
ambaben@benin.ca

**BOLIVIA**

His Ex. Edgar Torrez Mosqueira  
Embassy of the Republic of Bolivia  
130 Albert Street, Suite 416  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL 236-5730 FAX 236-8237  
embolivia04@yahoo.com

**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

His Ex. Milenko Mistic  
Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
130 Albert Street, Suite 805  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL 236-0028 FAX 236-1139  
embassyofbih@bellnet.ca  
www.bhembassy.ca

**BRAZIL**

His Ex. Valdemar Carneiro Leão  
Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil  
450 Wilbrod Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M8  
TEL 237-1090 FAX 237-6144  
mailbox@brasembottawa.org

**BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

Her Ex. Magdalene Chee Siong Teo  
High Commission for Brunei Darussalam  
395 Laurier Avenue East  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R4  
TEL 234-5656 FAX 234-4397  
bhco@bellnet.ca

**BULGARIA**

His Ex. Evgueni Stoychev  
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria  
325 Stewart Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6K5  
TEL 789-3215 FAX 789-3524

**BURKINA FASO**

Her Ex. Juliette Bonkougou  
Embassy of Burkina Faso  
48 Range Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4  
TEL 238-4796 FAX 238-3812  
burkina.faso@sympatico.ca  
www.ambaburkina-canada.org

**BURUNDI**

Her Ex. Appolonie Simbizi  
Embassy of the Republic of Burundi  
325 Dalhousie Street, Suite 815  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7G2  
TEL 789-0414 FAX 789-9537  
ambabottawa@yahoo.com  
http://ambabucanada.le-site.info

**CAMEROON**

Mr. Martin Agbor Mbeng  
Chargé d'Affaires  
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon  
170 Clemow Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2B4  
TEL 236-1522 FAX 236-3885

**CHILE**

His Ex. Eugenio Ortega Riquelme  
Embassy of the Republic of Chile  
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1413  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2  
TEL 235-9940 FAX 235-1176  
echileca@chile.ca  
www.chile.ca

**CHINA**

His Ex. Lu Shumin  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
515 St. Patrick Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5H3  
TEL 789-3434 FAX 789-1911  
www.chinaembassyCanada.org

**COLOMBIA**

His Ex. Jaime Giron Duarte  
Embassy of the Republic of Colombia  
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7  
TEL 230-3760 FAX 230-4416  
embajada@embajadacolombia.ca  
www.embajadacolombia.ca

**CONGO (ZAIRE)**

Ms. Louise Nzanga Ramazani  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
18 Range Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J3  
TEL 230-6391 FAX 230-1945

**COSTA RICA**

Her Ex. Emilia Maria Alvarez Navarro  
Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica  
325 Dalhousie Street, Suite 407  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7G2  
TEL 562-2855 FAX 562-2582  
embcrica@travel-net.com  
www.costaricaembassy.com

**CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Her Ex. Dienebou Kaba  
Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire  
9 Marlborough Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8E6  
TEL 236-9919 FAX 563-8287  
acica@ambaci-ottawa.org  
www.ambaci-ottawa.org



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229 Chapel Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Y6  
TEL. 562-7820 FAX 562-7821  
Croatia.emb@mvpei.hr  
www.croatiaemb.net

**CUBA**

His Ex. Ernesto Antonio Senti  
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba  
388 Main Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1E3  
TEL. 563-0141 FAX 563-0068  
cuba@embacuba.ca  
www.embacuba.ca

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

His Ex. Pavel Vosalik  
Embassy of the Czech Republic  
251 Cooper Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G2  
TEL. 562-3875 FAX 562-3878  
ottawa@embassy.mzv.cz

**DENMARK**

His Ex. Poul Erik Dam Kristensen  
Royal Danish Embassy  
47 Clarence Street, Suite 450  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9K1  
TEL. 562-1811 FAX 562-1812  
ottamb@um.dk  
www.ambottawa.um.dk

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

His Ex. Eduardo J. Tejera  
Embassy of the Dominican Republic  
130 Albert Street, Suite 418  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 569-9893 FAX 569-8673  
www.drembassy.org

**ECUADOR**

His Ex. Fernando Ribadeneira  
Fernández-Salvador  
Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador  
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 316  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2  
TEL. 563-4286 FAX 235-5776

**EGYPT**

His Ex. Mahmoud F. El-Saeed  
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
454 Laurier Avenue East  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R3  
TEL. 234-4931 FAX 234-4398  
egyptemb@sympatico.ca  
www.mfa.gov.eg

**EL SALVADOR**

His Ex. Mauricio Rosales Rivera  
Embassy of the Republic of El Salvador  
209 Kent Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Z8  
TEL. 238-2939 FAX 238-6940  
embajada@elsalvador-ca.org

**ERITREA**

Office of the Embassy of Eritrea in  
Ottawa  
75 Albert Street, Suite 610  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7  
TEL. 234-3989 FAX 234-6213

**ESTONIA**

Rasmus Lumi  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Republic of Estonia  
260 Dalhousie Street, Suite 210  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7E4  
TEL. 789-4222 FAX 789-9555  
embassy.ottawa@mfa.ee  
www.estemb.ca

**ETHIOPIA**

His Ex. Getachew Hailemariam  
Embassy of the Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia  
151 Slater Street, Suite 210  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5P2  
TEL. 235-6637 FAX 235-4638  
infoethi@magi.com  
www.ethiopia.ottawa.on.ca

**EUROPEAN UNION**

His Ex. Dorian Prince  
Delegation of the European  
Commission to Canada  
45 O'Connor Street, Suite 1900  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A4  
TEL. 238-6464 FAX 238-5191  
delegation-canada@ec.europa.eu  
www.delcan.ec.europa.eu

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Embassy of the Former Yugoslav  
Republic of Macedonia  
130 Albert Street, Suite 1006  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 234-3882 FAX 233-1852

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His Ex. Pasi Mikael Patokallio  
Embassy of the Republic of Finland  
55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 850  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5  
TEL. 288-2233 FAX 288-2244  
embassy@finland.ca

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His Ex. Daniel Jouanneau  
Embassy of France  
42 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1M 2C9  
TEL. 789-1795 FAX 562-3704  
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His Ex. Joseph Obiang Ndoutoume  
Embassy of the Gabonese Republic  
4 Range Road, P.O. Box 368  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J5  
TEL. 232-5301 FAX 232-6916  
ambgabon@sprint.ca

**GERMANY**

His Ex. Matthias Martin Höpfner  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of  
Germany  
1 Waverley Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0T8  
TEL. 232-1101 FAX 594-9330  
germanembassyottawa@on.aibn.com

**GHANA**

Her Ex. Margaret Ivy Amoakohene  
High Commission for the Republic  
of Ghana  
1 Clemow Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2A9  
TEL. 236-0871 FAX 236-0874  
ghanacom@ghc-ca.com  
www.ghc-ca.com

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George Dogoritis  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Hellenic Republic  
80 MacLaren Street, Suite 76  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0K6  
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embassy@greekembassy.ca  
www.greekembassy.ca

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Embassy of the Republic of  
Guatemala

130 Albert Street, Suite 1010  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 233-7237 FAX 233-0135  
embassy1@embaguate-canada.com  
www.embaguate-canada.com

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His Ex. Aly Diané  
Embassy of the Republic of Guinea  
483 Wilbrod Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N1  
TEL. 789-8444 FAX 789-7560  
ambassadedeguinee@bellnet.ca

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High Commission for the Republic  
of Guyana  
151 Slater Street, Suite 309  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3  
TEL. 235-7249 FAX 235-1447

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Ms. Marie Nathalie Menos-Gissel  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Republic of Haiti  
130 Albert Street, Suite 1409  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5P2  
TEL. 238-1628 FAX 238-2986  
bohio@sympatico.ca

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Apostolic Nunciature  
724 Manor Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1M 0E3  
TEL. 746-4914 FAX 746-4786

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Embassy of the Republic of  
Honduras  
151 Slater Street, Suite 805  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3  
TEL. 233-8900 FAX 232-0193

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His Ex. Pál Vastagh  
Embassy of the Republic of  
Hungary  
299 Waverley Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0V9  
TEL. 230-2717 FAX 230-7560  
www.docuweb.ca/Hungary

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His Ex. Markus Örn Antonsson  
Embassy of Iceland  
360 Albert Street, Suite 710  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7  
TEL. 482-1944 FAX 482-1945  
icemb.ottawa@utn.stjr.is

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His Ex. Rajamani Lakshmi Narayan  
High Commission for the Republic  
of India  
10 Springfield Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1C9  
TEL. 744-3751 FAX 744-0913  
hicomind@hciottawa.ca  
www.hciottawa.ca

**INDONESIA**

His Ex. Djoko Hardono  
Embassy of the Republic of  
Indonesia  
55 Parkdale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5  
TEL. 724-1100 FAX 724-1105  
info@indonesia-ottawa.org  
www.indonesia-ottawa.org

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Seyed Mahdi Mohebi  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Islamic  
Republic of Iran  
245 Metcalfe Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2K2  
TEL. 235-4725 FAX 232-5612  
iranemb@salamiran.org  
www.salamiran.org

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His Ex. Howar M. Ziad  
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq  
215 McLeod Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0Z8  
TEL. 236-9177 FAX 236-9641  
media@iraqembassy.ca  
www.iraqembassy.ca

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His Ex. Declan Kelly  
Embassy of Ireland  
130 Albert Street, Suite 1105  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 233-6281 FAX 233-5835  
embassyofireland@rogers.com

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His Ex. Alan Baker  
Embassy of Israel  
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1005  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2  
TEL. 567-6450 FAX 567-9878  
info@ottawa.mfa.gov.il  
www.embassyofisreal.ca

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His Ex. Gabriele Sardo  
Embassy of the Italian Republic  
275 Slater Street, 21st Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9  
TEL. 232-2401 FAX 233-1484  
ambital@italyincanada.com  
www.italyincanada.com

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Her Ex. Evadne Coye  
Jamaican High Commission  
275 Slater Street, Suite 800  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9  
TEL. 233-9311 FAX 233-0611  
hc@jhcottawa.ca

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His Ex. Tsuneko Nishida  
Embassy of Japan  
255 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9E6  
TEL. 241-8541 FAX 241-2232  
infocul@embjapan.ca  
www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp

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Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom  
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100 Bronson Avenue, Suite 701  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6G8  
TEL. 238-8090 FAX 232-3341

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Her Ex. Judith Mbula Bahemuka  
High Commission for the Republic  
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415 Laurier Avenue East  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R4  
TEL. 563-1773 FAX 233-6599  
kenyahighcommission@rogers.com  
www.kenyahighcommission.ca

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His Ex. Soo-dong Kim  
Embassy of the Republic of Korea  
150 Boteler Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5A6  
TEL. 244-5010 FAX 244-5034  
www.emb-korea.ottawa.on.ca

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Embassy of the State of Kuwait  
333 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 1J9  
TEL. 780-9999 FAX 780-9905

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His Ex. Atis Sjanits  
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia  
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1200  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G8  
TEL. 238-6014 FAX 238-7044  
embassy.canada@mfa.gov.lv  
www.ottawa.mfa.gov.lv

**LEBANON**

Mr. Georges Abou Zeid  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of Lebanon  
640 Lyon Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3Z5  
TEL. 236-5825 FAX 232-1609  
info@lebanonembassy.ca  
www.lebanonembassy.ca

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Canada  
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Embassy of the Great Socialist  
People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1000  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6K7  
TEL. 230-0919 FAX 230-0683  
info@libya-canada.org

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Her Ex. Sigutė Jakstonytė  
Embassy of the Republic of  
Lithuania  
130 Albert Street, Suite 204  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 567-5458 FAX 567-5315

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His. Ex. Simon Constant Horace  
Embassy of the Republic of  
Madagascar  
65 Macnabb Place, Rockcliffe Park  
Ottawa, ON K1L 8J5  
TEL: 567-0505 FAX 567-2882  
ambamadcanada@bellnet.ca  
www.madagascar-embassy.ca

**MALAYSIA**

His Ex. Dennis Ignatius  
High Commission for Malaysia  
60 Boteler Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8Y7  
TEL. 241-5182 FAX 241-5214  
malottawa@kln.gov.my

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His Ex. Mamadou Bandiougou  
Diawara  
Embassy of the Republic of Mali  
50 Goulburn Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8C8

TEL. 232-1501 FAX 232-7429  
ambassadedumali@rogers.com  
www.ambamalianada.org

**MAURITANIA**

His Ex. Mahfoud Ben Deddach  
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of  
Mauritania  
121 Sherwood Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 3V1  
TEL. 237-3283 FAX 237-3287

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His Ex. Emilio Rafael Jose  
Goicoechea  
Embassy of the United Mexican  
States  
45 O'Connor Street, Suite 1000  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A4  
TEL. 233-8988 FAX 235-9123  
info@embamexcan.com  
www.embamexcan.com

**MONGOLIA**

His Ex. Gotov Dugerjav  
Embassy of Mongolia  
151 Slater Street, Suite 503  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3  
TEL. 569-3830 FAX 569-3916  
mail@mongolembassy.org

**MOROCCO**

His Ex. Mohamed Tangi  
Embassy of the Kingdom of  
Morocco  
38 Range Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4  
TEL. 236-7391 FAX 236-6164

**MYANMAR**

Mr. Maung Maung  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Union of Myanmar  
85 Range Road, Suite 902  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J6  
TEL. 232-9990 FAX 232-6999  
meott@rogers.com

**NETHERLANDS**

His Ex. Karel de Beer  
Embassy of the Kingdom of the  
Netherlands  
350 Albert Street, Suite 2020  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1A4  
TEL. 237-5030 FAX 237-6471  
Ott-cdp@minbuza.nl

**NEW ZEALAND**

Her Ex. Kathleen Janet Lackey  
New Zealand High Commission  
99 Bank Street, Suite 727  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G3  
TEL. 238-5991 FAX 238-5707  
info@nzhcottawa.org  
www.nzembassy.com/home.cfm?c=38

**NIGER**

Her Ex. Nana Aicha Fomakoye  
Embassy of the Republic of the  
Niger  
38 Blackburn Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8A3  
TEL. 232-4291 FAX 230-9808

**NIGERIA**

His Ex. Olufemi Oyewale George  
High Commission for the Federal  
Republic of Nigeria  
295 Metcalfe Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1R9  
Tel. 236-0521 Fax 236-0529

**NORWAY**

His Ex. Tor Berntin Naess  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway  
90 Sparks Street, Suite 532  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5B4  
TEL. 238-6571 FAX 238-2765  
emb.ottawa@mfa.no  
www.emb-norway.ca

**O/OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES**

Ms. Anita Gertrude Joseph  
Chargé d'Affaires  
130 Albert Street, Suite 700  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 236-8952 FAX 236-3042  
echcc@travel-net.com  
www.oecs.org/ottawa/index.html

**PAKISTAN**

His. Ex. Musa Javed Chohan  
High Commission for the Islamic  
Republic of Pakistan  
10 Range Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J3  
TEL. 238-7881 FAX 238-7296  
parepottawa@rogers.com

**PALESTINE**

Mr. Amin Abou-Hassira  
Head of the General Delegation  
45 Country Club Dr.,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1V 9W1  
TEL: 736-0053  
FAX: 736-0535  
palestinegd@rogers.com

**PANAMA**

Her Ex. Romy Vásquez de González  
Embassy of the Republic of Panama  
130 Albert Street, Suite 300  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 236-7177 FAX 236-5775  
pancanem@rapidweb.ca

**PARAGUAY**

His Ex. Juan E. Aguirre Martinez  
Embassy of the Republic of  
Paraguay  
151 Slater Street, Suite 501  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3  
TEL. 567-1283 FAX 567-1679  
consularsection@embassyof-  
paraguay.ca

**PERU**

His Ex. Guillermo Russo  
Embassy of the Republic of Peru  
130 Albert Street, Suite 1901  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 238-1777 FAX 232-3062  
emperuca@bellnet.ca

**PHILIPPINES**

His Ex. Jose S. Brillantes  
Embassy of the Republic of the  
Philippines  
130 Albert Street, Suite 606  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4  
TEL. 233-1121 FAX 233-4165  
embassyofphilippines@rogers.com

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**Jennifer Campbell**  
Editor  
(613) 231-8476  
editor@diplomatonline.com

**Neil Reynolds**  
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**Donna Jacobs**  
Associate Publisher

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# Searching for the French in Hanoi

By George Fetherling

Within 24 hours of arriving in Hanoi I was, inevitably, approached about purchasing marijuana and, in a charming carry-over from the 1960s Saigon, the services of “boom-boom girls”. That first day, I also had a fellow pull a switchblade on me. Actually, he was a knife vendor demonstrating his wares only a few inches from my throat, but this wasn’t immediately apparent as he didn’t have his tray of knives in front of him but kept it under one arm where I didn’t quite see it for what it was. We had a tense moment. Then, shortly afterward, my friend and I saw something wonderful.

We had taken what looked like the maid’s quarters in a small hotel in the Hoàn Kiếm District: a miniscule slot-like room with a teak floor, under the eaves five storeys up, one more than was serviced by the lift. We had just left the lobby for the extreme hubbub outside when suddenly the street vendors began gathering up their goods and disappearing somewhere. In what seemed an instant, they were gone, and their potential customers with them. Thinking that this simply indicated the day’s instalment of the monsoon, we naively thought people were over-reacting, even as leaves, twigs and other debris started to swirl about the empty intersection as though trapped in a wind tunnel. We went back upstairs for our umbrellas. Before we even reached the room, the sky was as dark as in a total eclipse and the tropical storm was well underway.

It was inspiring to stand in our rickety lodging overlooking perhaps two centuries worth of red-tiled rooftops as gale-force winds came from the west, blowing the rain in such a way that it was perfectly perpendicular to the streets, which soon flooded. Bamboo antennae and even steel ones toppled off roofs into the lanes below. Tarpaulins rudely torn from one building became tangled in another. Windows shattered. The most amazing feature was the way the thick curtain of fast-moving rain obscured all the luxury joint-venture hotels and other new high-rise construction in the distance. What was left looked like a Doré engraving of Paris illustrating a work by Victor Hugo. A compelling sight for the couple of hours it lasted, and as close as we have



ISTOCK

ever got to feeling that there is still a French atmosphere in Hanoi.

The streets round St Joseph’s Cathedral, described as a lingering expression of the old colonial culture, are nothing of the sort. They are no more French than the French Quarter of New Orleans (which is actually Spanish). In practical terms, the greatest experience of French culture my friend and I came upon in Hanoi was a pair of backpacking Québécoises living in the same run-down pension as ourselves. They were travelling together. Although not related, they were identically dressed, identically tattooed, and pierced from top to toe. They were both named Véronique. This naturally led to confusion that seemed uproarious at the time, especially to them.

The storm ended as abruptly as it began, and we went looking for a place to have a congenial drink. We found a jazz club where a four-piece Vietnamese band—tenor sax, bass, keyboard and drums—was working itself into quite a lather while waiters slithered up to all the little round tables with trays of intimate antiquarian cocktails such as sidecars and White Russians. I remember that the music too was attractively of a certain period, as though we had time-travelled back to classic modernism. It was the kind of nightclub where you could ask the band-

leader “Est-ce que vous connaissez le Muskrat Ramble?” and the answer would be yes.

Yet I could not quite place the familiar-sounding melody line running beneath what the saxophonist had been pounding out for the past 20 minutes or so. It would have come to me, but my concentration was broken by what I believed might be incipient violence. Two tables away was an obvious example of the former American military man returned on a mission of exorcism and nostalgia, what the Vietnamese call a *vietnamman*, all one word. He was about 65, bull-necked, with a white buzz cut, and must have been drinking much of the afternoon. His heckling of the musicians became so loud that the sax player was no longer able to drown it out. He was, it seemed to me, only one scotch away from standing up and screaming some imprecation about dog-eatin’ sonsabitches. I thought I’d better get my companion out of there and myself with her.

Later that night, lying sleepless in the garret room, the name of the tune suddenly came to me. Was it Ellington? Was it Basie? No, it was the theme music from *The Flintstones*.

George Fetherling is a Vancouver poet, novelist and cultural commentator.

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