

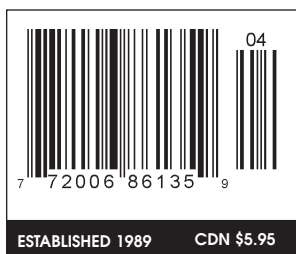
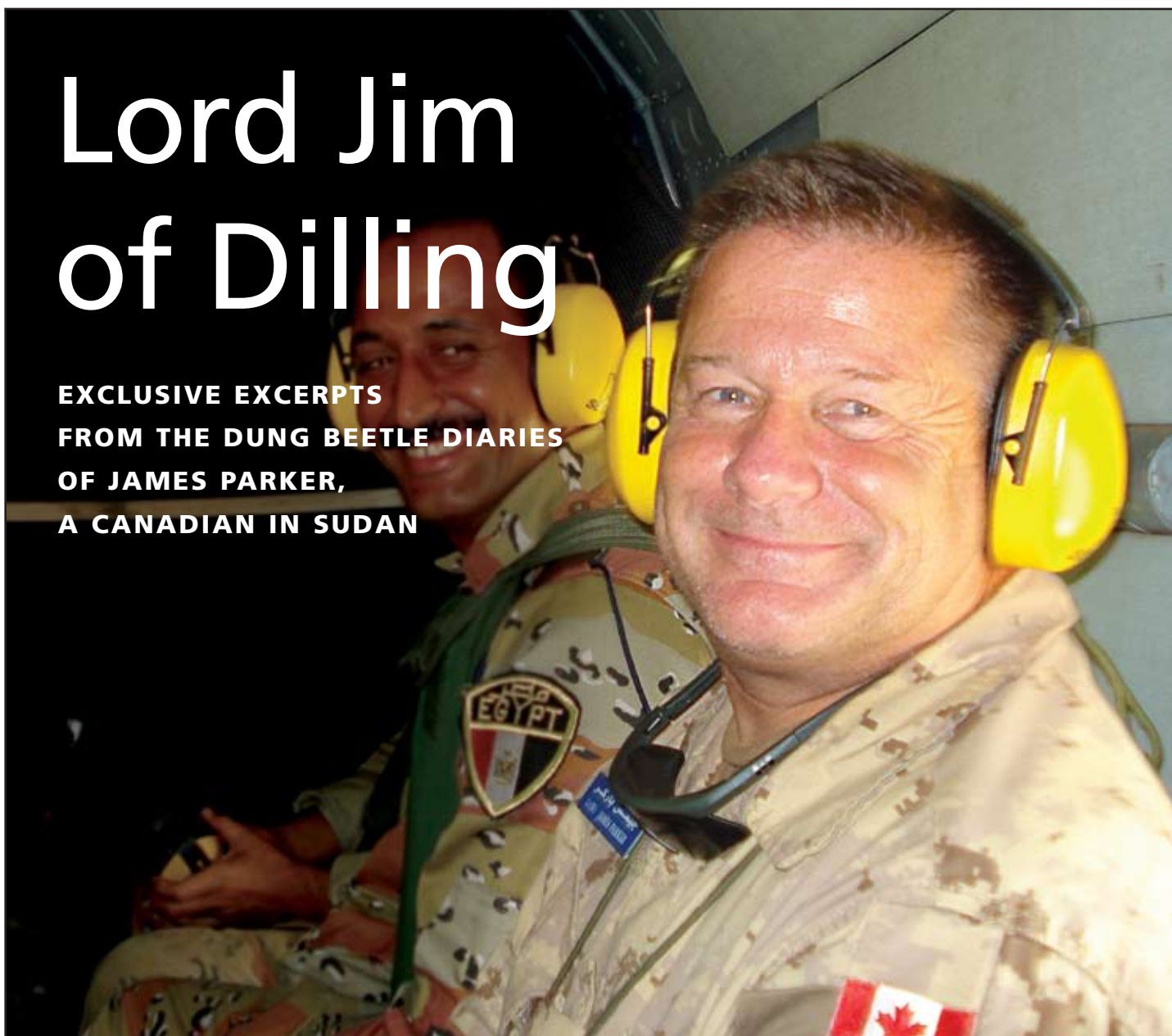
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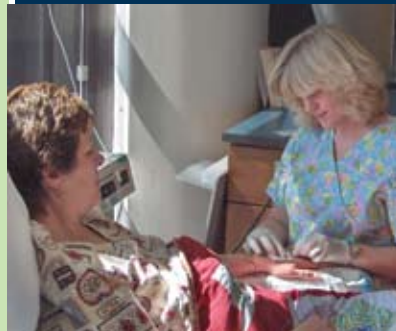


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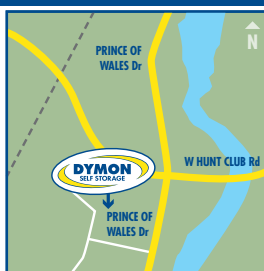
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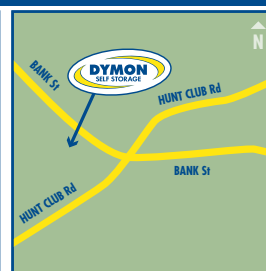
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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

*Diplomat & International Canada* is published four times a year. Subscription rates: individual, one year \$35.70. For Canadian orders add 5 per cent GST. U.S. orders please add \$15 for postage. All other orders please add \$25.

### SUBMISSIONS

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Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1P 5R2

Phone: (613) 259-3038

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E-mail: info@diplomatonline.com

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Published by

Sparrow House

Enterprises Inc.



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## A land of smiles and tears

**W**e read snippets about it, stories that tell us bits about Sudan, particularly Darfur, where the humanitarian crisis deepens and the country's President, Omar Al-Bashir, faces arrest on charges of crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court.

But what is it like to live there? What is it like for the displaced thousands? The thousands more who live in fear every day?

And what's it like for a Canadian to meet school-aged children grateful for the simple gift of a pencil or notepad? We find out from Canada's James Parker, a former prep school gym teacher and part-time naval reservist who wondered if he was missing something in life and ended up answering the Canadian Forces' call for military observers for the United Nations' Operation Safari. He was to be a neutral person who would report to UN headquarters on what he witnessed, including villages threatened by nomads or soldiers, and infractions of the UN-brokered but tenuous peace agreement to end a 25-year civil war.

Writing from the town of Dilling, he describes the homes of its 30,000 inhabitants as being built from straw, bits of tin, burlap, plastic and rough bricks fashioned from red earth. He takes us to other regions and tells us about his adventures on a heavy, rusty bike he bought and dubbed "The Beast," and then festooned with a UN flag. And he tells us the story of one of his colleagues who wanted to raise a little money for school supplies and ended up raising enough to build a school.

His story is part diary, part essay. It will depress and uplift you at the same time. And that's fitting since he describes Sudan as a country beset by dichotomy: hope, despair, smiles, tears.

If you're in need of some spirituality after that read, we have an excerpt from



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

a prayer breakfast in Washington attended by U.S. President Barack Obama and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Both are men of faith and Mr. Blair describes how his father was an

ardent atheist.

We also have an interview with Canadian diplomatic veteran, Arthur Menzies, who spent 41 years in the foreign service and served under six prime ministers. At 92, his mind is sharp and his memory for detail infallible. This came in handy as he wrote the book of memoirs *Penumbra Press* is publishing this month. But if detail's not what you want, he also tells a good story about the time Pierre Trudeau visited Australia while he was on a seven-year stint as high commissioner.

Our book reviewer, George Fetherling, offers a look at titles about philanthropy, Tibet and the "great, non-existent Bhutan conspiracy." Food columnist Margaret Dickenson writes about how to prepare a perfect Mother's Day feast while wine columnist Pieter Van Den Weghe tells us how to order wine in restaurants. We also look inside the residence of Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Iremark. Dyanne Wilson's great photography will make you feel as though you're actually visiting the amiable ambassador, whose home is full of Swedish art and Swedish furniture, some of it ultra-modern, some dating back centuries.

For travel, we give you a blow-by-blow of a perfect two-week road trip to Maine, an American East Coast gem. Among U.S. destinations, Maine is often overlooked in favour of Florida, but like Florida, it offers great beaches – and much more, including lakes and mountains as well as funky towns and sophisticated cities. Something for everyone. And if the journey is part of the appeal, we tell you what you need to know to drive there.

## UP FRONT

Canadian James Parker worked as a UN observer in Sudan and chronicled his journey in our cover story. He's shown here in a chopper where his primary thought was "Lord, please don't let this old Russian helo crash!" It's what he thought every time he climbed into one, he says. On this flight, he and an Egyptian guard were headed to a village for "monitoring and verification" of troops, weapons and ammunition, or to do a "village security assessment." They would report everything up the chain, "to be swallowed and nothing ever done by the big maw of the UN," he says.



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jim Parker, author of "The Dung Beetle Diaries"**



Jim Parker, originally from Barrie, lives in Victoria, B.C. after having gone there for graduate studies more than 20 years ago. He has been a columnist; he's trained Olympic and professional athletes; and he's owned a fitness centre. He has taught sports, recreation and anatomy at the college and university level, and physical education at a prep school in Victoria. He is a part-time naval reservist in his 22nd year of duty. He shares a home with his partner, Heather, and is dominated by their dog, Judd. He enjoyed writing our cover story and fully expects to get in trouble with the Department of National Defence and the United Nations for doing so.

**Betty Nygaard King, author of "The woman behind Gershwin's career"**



Betty Nygaard King hails from Ottawa, where she earned degrees in English literature and music at Carleton University. She cut her writing teeth working as a communications officer and editor in various government positions. Her first book was *Hell Hath No Fury: Famous Women in Crime*; she was the ghost-writer behind the memoirs of the composer and conductor Alexander Brott. By day, Ms. King is a subject editor with the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada and freelance researcher for the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. By night, she teaches piano and indulges a passion for "Coronation Street."

*Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair joined U.S. President Barack Obama for a national prayer breakfast in Washington, D.C. in February. Some 4,000 people, including representatives from 180 countries, joined them. Their speeches are excerpted here.*

**Barack Obama: 'A moment of peace and goodwill'**

I know this breakfast has a long history in Washington, and faith has always been a guiding force in our family's life, so we feel very much at home and look forward to keeping this tradition alive during our time here.

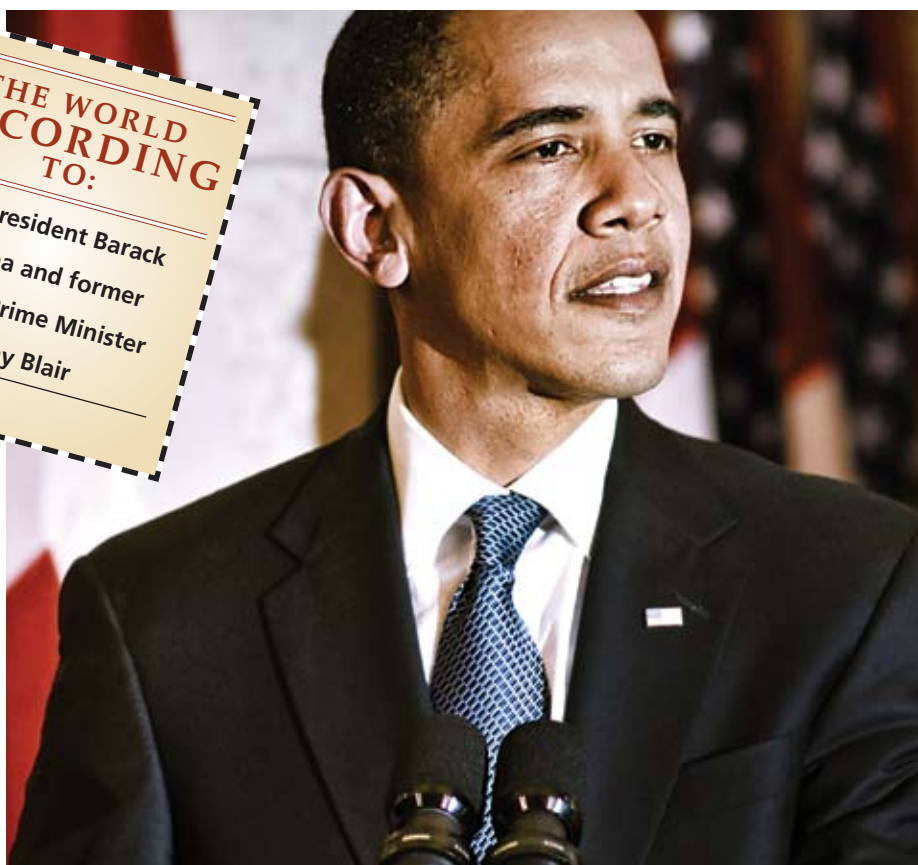
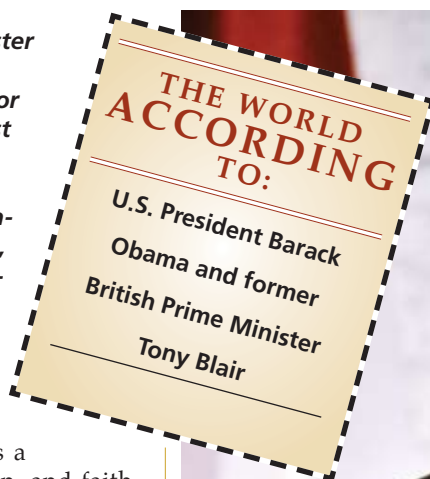
It's a tradition that I'm told actually began many years ago in the city of Seattle. It was the height of the Great Depression, and most people found themselves out of work. Many fell into poverty. Some lost everything.

The leaders of the community did all that they could for those who were suffering in their midst. And then they decided to do something more: they prayed. It didn't matter what party or religious affiliation to which they belonged. They simply gathered one morning as brothers and sisters to share a meal and talk with God.

These breakfasts soon sprouted up throughout Seattle, and quickly spread to cities and towns across America, eventually making their way to Washington. A short time after President Eisenhower asked a group of Senators if he could join their prayer breakfast, it became a national event. And today, as I see presidents and dignitaries here from every corner of the globe, it strikes me that this is one of the rare occasions that still brings much of the world together in a moment of peace and goodwill.

**Tony Blair: 'By the way, God bless you all'**

The world participated in the celebration of your [Barack Obama's] election. Now the hard work begins. And now, also, we should be as steadfast for you in the hard work as in the celebration. You don't need cheerleaders but partners; not spectators but supporters. The truest friends are those still around when the going is toughest. We offer you our friendship today. We will work with you to make your presidency one that shapes our destiny to the credit of



BEN WELAND

Obama: "And then they decided to do something more: they prayed."

America and of the world. Mr. President, we salute you and wish you well.

After 10 years as British Prime Minister, I decided to choose something easy. I became involved in the Middle East Peace Process.

There are many frustrations – that is evident. There is also one blessing. I spend much of my time in the Holy Land and in the Holy City. The other evening, I climbed to the top of Notre Dame in Jerusalem. You look left and see the Garden of Gethsemane. You look right and see where the Last Supper was held. Straight ahead lies Golgotha. In the distance is where King David was crowned and still further where Abraham was laid to rest. And of course in the centre of Jerusalem is the Al Aqsa Mosque, where according to the Qur'an, the Prophet was transported to commune with the prophets of the past.

Rich in conflict, it is also sublime in history. The other month in Jericho, I visited the Mount of Temptation. I think they bring all the political leaders there. My guide – a Palestinian – was bemoaning the travails of his nation. Suddenly he stopped, looked heavenwards and said "Moses, Jesus, Mohammed: Why did they all have to come here?"

It is a good place to reflect on religion: a source of so much inspiration; an excuse for so much evil.

Today, religion is under attack from without and from within. From within, it is corroded by extremists who use their faith as a means of excluding the other. I am what I am in opposition to you. If you do not believe as I believe, you are a lesser human being.

From without, religious faith is assailed by an increasingly aggressive secularism, which derides faith as contrary to reason and defines faith by conflict. Thus do the extreme believers and the aggressive non-believers come together in unholy alliance.

And yet, faith will not be so easily cast. For billions of people, faith motivates, galvanizes, compels and inspires, not to exclude but to embrace; not to provoke conflict but to try to do good. This is faith in action. You can see it in countless local communities where those from churches, mosques, synagogues and temples tend the sick, care for the afflicted, work long hours in bad conditions to bring hope to the despairing and salvation to the lost. You can see it in the arousing of the world's conscience to the plight of Africa.



There are a million good deeds done every day by people of faith. These are those for whom, in the parable of the sower, the seed fell on good soil and yielded 60 or a hundredfold.

What inspires such people?

Ritual or doctrine or the finer points of theology? No.

I remember my first spiritual awakening. I was 10 years old. That day my father – at the young age of 40 – had suffered a serious stroke. His life hung in the balance. My mother, to keep some sense of normality in the crisis, sent me to school. My teacher knelt and prayed with me. Now my father was a militant atheist. Before we prayed, I thought I should confess this. “I’m afraid my father doesn’t believe in God,” I said. “That doesn’t matter,” my teacher replied. “God believes in him. He loves him without demanding or needing love in return.”

That is what inspires: the unconditional nature of God’s love. A promise perpetually kept. A covenant never broken.

And in surrendering to God, we become instruments of that love.

Rabbi Hillel was once challenged by a pagan, who said: if you can recite the whole of the Torah standing on one leg, I will convert to being a Jew. Rabbi Hillel stood on one leg and said “That which is hateful to you, do it not unto your neighbour. That is the Torah. Everything else is commentary. Go and study it.”

As the Qur’an states: “If anyone saves a person, it will be as if he has saved the whole of humanity.”

Faith is not discovered in acting according to ritual but acting according to God’s will and God’s will is love.

We might also talk of the Hindu: “Living beyond the reach of I and mine.” Or the words of the Buddha: “After practicing enlightenment, you must go back to practice compassion.” Or the Sikh scripture: “God’s bounties are common to all. It is we who have created divisions.”

Each faith has its beliefs. Each is different. Yet at a certain point each is in communion with the other.

Examine the impact of globalization. Forget for a moment its rights and wrongs. Just look at its effects. Its characteristic is that it pushes the world together. It is not only an economic force. The consequence is social, even cultural.

The global community – “it takes a village,” as someone once coined it – is upon us. Into it steps religious faith. If faith becomes the property of extremists, it will originate discord. But if, by contrast,



Blair: “When our courage fails, our faith can support it, lift it up.”

different faiths can reach out to and have knowledge of one another, then instead of being reactionary, religious faith can be a force for progress.

The foundation which bears my name and which I began less than a year ago is dedicated to achieving understanding, action and reconciliation between the different faiths for the common good. It is not about the faith that looks inward; but the faith that resolutely turns us towards each other.

Bringing the faith communities together fulfils an objective important to all of us, believers and non-believers.

But as someone of faith, this is not enough. I believe restoring religious faith to its rightful place, as the guide to our world and its future, is itself of the essence. The 21st century will be poorer in spirit, meaner in ambition, less disciplined in conscience, if it is not under the guardianship of faith in God.

I do not mean by this to blur the correct distinction between the realms of religious and political authority. In Britain, we are especially mindful of this. I recall giving an address to the country at a time of crisis. I wanted to end my words with “God bless the British people.”

This caused complete consternation. Emergency meetings were convened. The system was aghast. Finally, as I sat trying to defend my words, a senior civil servant said, with utter disdain: “Really, Prime Minister, this is not America, you know.”

Neither do I decry the work of humanists, who give gladly of themselves for others and who can often shame the avowedly religious. Those who do God’s work are God’s people.

I only say that there are limits to humanism and beyond those limits God and only God can work. The phrase “fear of God” conjures up the vengeful God of parts of the Old Testament. But “fear of God” means really obedience to God; humility before God; acceptance through God that there is something bigger, better and more important than you. It is that humbling of man’s vanity, that stirring of conscience through God’s prompting, that recognition of our limitations, that faith alone can bestow.

We can perform acts of mercy, but only God can lend them dignity. We can forgive, but only God forgives completely in the full knowledge of our sin.

And only through God comes grace; and it is God’s grace that is unique.



John Newton, who had been that most obnoxious of things, a slave-trader, wrote the hymn *Amazing Grace*.

"'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear. And Grace, my fears relieved." It is through faith, by the Grace of God, that we have the courage to live as we should and die as we must.

When I was prime minister, I had cause often to reflect on leadership. Courage in leadership is not simply about having the nerve to take difficult decisions or even in doing the right thing since often times God alone knows what the right thing is.

It is to be in our natural state – which is one of nagging doubt, imperfect knowledge, and uncertain prediction – and to be prepared nonetheless to put on the mantle of responsibility and to stand up in full view of the world, to step out when others step back, to assume the loneliness of the final decision-maker, not sure of success but unsure of it.

And it is in that "not knowing" that the courage lies.

And when in that state, our courage fails, our faith can support it, lift it up, keep it from stumbling.

I finish where I began: in the Holy Land, at Mount Nebo in Jordan, where Moses gazed on the Promised Land. There is a chapel there, built by pilgrims in the 4th century. The sermon was preached by an American, who spent his life as an airline pilot and then, after his wife's death, took holy orders. His words are the words of a Christian but they speak to all those of faith, who want God's grace to guide their life.

He said this: "While here on earth, we need to make a vital decision, whether to be mere spectators, or movers and shakers for the Kingdom of God, whether to stay among the curious, or take up a cross. And this means: no standing on the sidelines. We're either in the game or we're not. I sometimes ask myself the question: If I were to die today, what would my life have stood for? The answer can't be an impulsive one, and we all need to count the cost before we give an answer. Because to be able to say yes to one thing, means to say no to many others. But we must also remember, that the greatest danger is not impulsiveness, but inaction."

It is fitting at this extraordinary moment in your country's history that we hear that call to action; and we pray that in acting, we do God's work and follow God's will.

And by the way, God bless you all.

Compiled by Donna Jacobs

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## Diplomatic digs for laureates

**D**iplomats in Ottawa have been helping out a unique international piano program since former British High Commissioner David Reddaway and his wife Roshan set the precedent in 2005.

Known as Honens, the program is a piano competition that happens every three years. Pianists from around the world compete for cash prizes and the potentially more lucrative “artistic and career development program,” which launches and nurtures their careers in music.

Entrants must first apply and send references. The 90 selected from that process will compete in 40-minute recitals before live audiences in Calgary, Munich and New York. Judges watch recorded versions and choose 21 to go to the quarterfinals in Calgary in the fall, where the semifinals and finals also take place over a two-week period.

In the end, there are eight cash prizes which include three for \$3,000, two for \$10,000 and then a first, second and third laureate prize for \$35,000, \$25,000 and \$17,500 respectively.

The founder of the program was a woman named Esther Honens who was born in Pittsburgh but lived in Calgary from an early age. She and her husband accumulated their wealth in real estate and in 1991, at the age of 88, she made a gift of \$5 million toward creating a world-class piano competition in Calgary. She died two days after the first Honens International Piano Competition took place in 1992.

Her goal in her own words: “My vision



Pianist Hong Xu performed at the residence of Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Iremark.

is to identify the finest of today’s young pianists, to bring them to Calgary in a competition that is held in the highest international esteem, and to create a legacy of musical excellence that can be enjoyed by Canadians for countless generations.”

Today, those competitions continue and all over Canada, there are donors’ circles that support the program. In Ottawa, those who donate \$1,000 per year receive, in return, two tickets to three concerts annually.

Enter the diplomatic corps: The Reddaways hosted one such concert in 2005 and last year, German Ambassador Matthias Höpfner and his wife Christine hosted an event that featured the talents of 2006 Laureate Hinrich Alpers, who is, himself,

from Germany.

“It’s nice when we can pair up a performer with the embassy of their country of origin,” said Keltie Mierins, who chairs the Ottawa Laureate Circle committee. Last month, Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Iremark hosted a concert that featured Hong Xu, of China. The third 2006 Laureate, Minsoo Sohn, is from South Korea so Ms. Mierins is hoping she can convince the incoming Korean ambassador to host an event, once he or she arrives and gets settled.

In addition to performing for donors circles across the country, laureates of the program perform in communities – in hospitals, retirement homes, public libraries and community centres, and in schools.



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**PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AS AMBASSADOR:** Oct. 21, 2008  
**PREVIOUS POSTINGS:** Ambassador-at-Large for science, technology and education, ambassador to Japan



At the Prague EU-Canada Summit in May, the "main deliverables" should include the launch of official negotiations for a trade deal.

**T**he Czech Republic is the second country from the big wave of EU enlargement in 2004 to preside over the organization. This is happening from January to June of this year and our positions and priorities are not only those of the Czech government; the role of the country presiding over the EU is to represent the whole European Union externally, to facilitate consensus within it, to moderate and inspire debate amidst member countries, and to implement the agreed-upon work program. This program includes areas such as energy, transport, environment, employment and social policy, education and sports, health, agriculture and fisheries, justice, and home affairs.

The motto of this six-month Czech presidency of the Union, "Europe without barriers," reflects the fundamental goal of implementing the four principal freedoms – free movement of goods, capital, labour, and services. Its logo, representing Europe with multicoloured two-letter symbols to identify each country in Europe along with the name of the website [www.eu2009.cz](http://www.eu2009.cz), symbolically adds a fifth freedom, that of information and knowledge exchange.

On the other hand, Europe without barriers is certainly not Europe without rules and borders. Removal of internal borders and barriers must go hand in hand with protection of citizens against illegal or criminal activities that may threaten the safety and interests of Europeans.

Our priorities during this presidency are epitomized by the "three Es" – Economy, Energy and the EU's external relations. Within the last priority (external

relations), we emphasize transatlantic relations and dialogue with our North American partners in economy, climate and energy, as well as co-operation with third countries. The ongoing negotiations to draw up the Deepened Economic Part-

**THE MOTTO OF THIS SIX-MONTH CZECH PRESIDENCY OF THE UNION, "EUROPE WITHOUT BARRIERS," REFLECTS THE FUNDAMENTAL GOAL OF IMPLEMENTING THE FOUR PRINCIPAL FREEDOMS – FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS, CAPITAL, LABOUR, AND SERVICES.**

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nership Agreement between the EU and Canada is a recent demonstration of our interest in more intense co-operation.

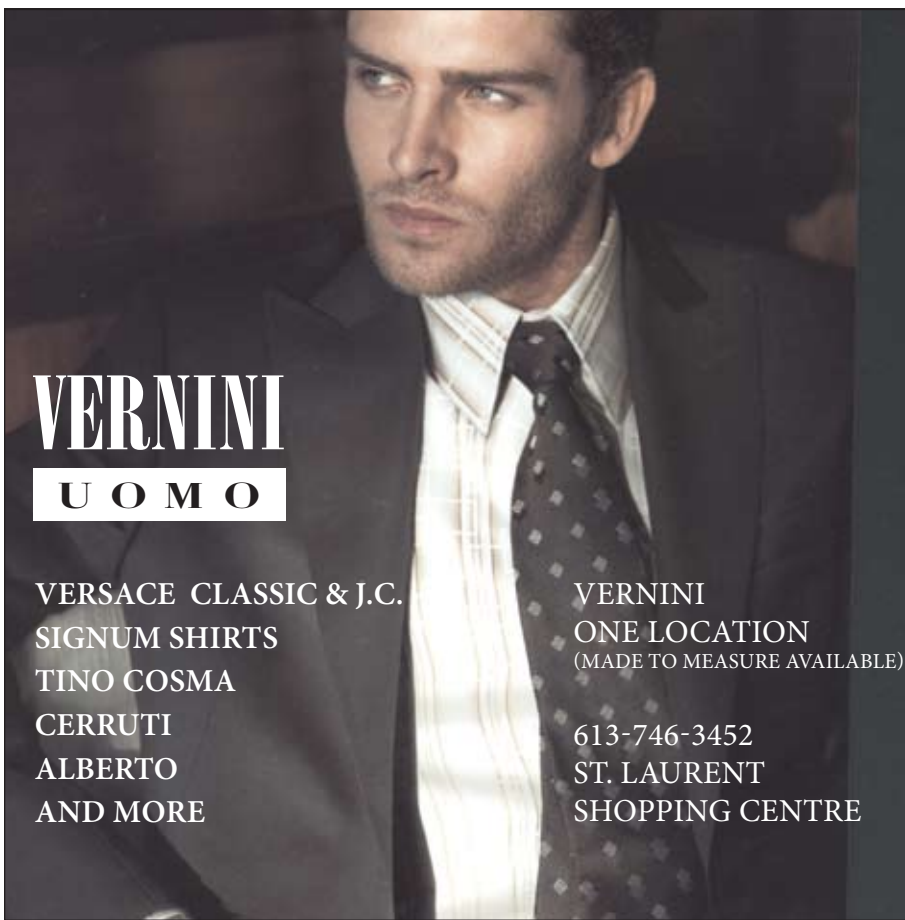
Canada, as a traditional trade partner and important transatlantic political ally of the European Union, has been a

priority for strengthening our trade and investment relations, especially during the current world economic crisis. In October 2008, the EU and Canada released a joint study which concludes that trade liberalization in goods and services will benefit both the EU and Canada.

The study illuminates a potential for improvement in labour mobility, the environment, regulatory co-operation, and science and technology. It recommends that any future agreement should include provisions on tariff elimination, reduction of non-tariff barriers, agriculture export subsidies, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, customs procedures, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and the legitimate temporary movement of persons related to bilateral trade and investment.

The "deepened economic partnership" is primarily about abolishing any kind of barriers to the smooth movement of goods and services on either side. We would like to open new markets and possibilities for businesses from the EU and Canada. The negotiations which led to this Partnership will send a positive signal to the world that both partners are ready to fight protectionism in these uncertain economic times. We must ensure that everything negotiated during the upcoming process will be implemented at the national as well as sub-national level on both sides, to





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keep our relationship well balanced and flourishing.

The Prague EU-Canada Summit planned for May should concentrate on trade and economic issues, foreign policy and international security, and global issues such as climate change, environmental protection, energy security, cooperation in science, education and research, healthcare and medical research, human rights and humanitarian assistance. But, the main deliverables from the point of view of the presidency – and we are optimistic about this – should be the official launch of negotiations of the “deepened economic partnership agreement” and the signing of an air services agreement and an air security agreement if all necessary legislative procedures are concluded.

The Czech presidency started almost at the very moment of serious economic downturn of the world economy. It is our opinion that the key conditions for economic recovery are to prevent excessive regulation and avoid protectionism.

Energy security was placed among our main political priorities long before the serious disruption of natural gas supplies to Europe at the beginning of this year. As a country dependent on imports of gas and oil, we understand the importance of energy security as a requirement for economic wellbeing and free and independent foreign policy.

The crisis in the Middle East, which erupted again at the beginning of this year, reminded us that besides our regular external priorities, we must also count on unforeseen urgent tasks. From our historical perspective, the focus on the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, deepened co-operation with the countries of this region, as well as the countries of the Balkan, Caucasus and Caspian regions, are a vital part of our foreign policy priority. A new agreement with Russia will also be of fundamental importance and recent developments have emphasized the necessity of a common approach by the entire EU.

The main added value of our presidency should be consensus building amongst the EU member states and working towards full implementation of the stated priorities of the presidency. We have assumed our task with the utmost responsibility, keeping in mind the interests of the EU as a whole and we wish to deliver as much as possible.

**Karel Zbrakovsky is the Czech Republic's ambassador to Canada.**

## A distinguished diplomat's escapades with Trudeau, his passion for Fiji and his memoirs

*At 92, Arthur Menzies is writing a book. And it's about time he put pen to paper to record some of his recollections of a 41-year-career. The career diplomat worked under six prime ministers including William Lyon MacKenzie King, Louis St. Laurent, John Diefenbaker, Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau and Joe Clark. He met his wife, Sheila, while studying at Harvard and the two had postings in Cuba, Japan, Malaysia (then called Malaya) and Burma, Australia and Fiji, and Belgium (NATO). His final posting was as ambassador to China (and Vietnam) and he returned to the place where he was born to missionary parents. Mr. Menzies retired some*

*27 years ago, but he still maintains a keen interest in international affairs. He sat down with Diplomat's editor, Jennifer Campbell, to discuss his book project, among other things.*

**Diplomat magazine:** Tell me about your book.

**Arthur Menzies:** When I went away to Harvard in 1939 to study Far Eastern History, I started typing a letter a week to my parents. I kept a carbon copy. When I got married, we continued that procedure for the 55 years that we were together before my wife got ill (Sheila Skelton had Alzheimer's and died in 1998). So I have boxes of letters from all over the world. When we were in Ottawa – I spent half my time in Ottawa and half abroad – it was as easy to pick up the phone so there are fewer letters from that time. I decided it may be of interest to Canadians to see what the workings of a high commissioner or ambassador are. Half of the letters are written by my wife, half by me.

**DM:** Your book opens by talking about your time in Australia. Will it include more than that?

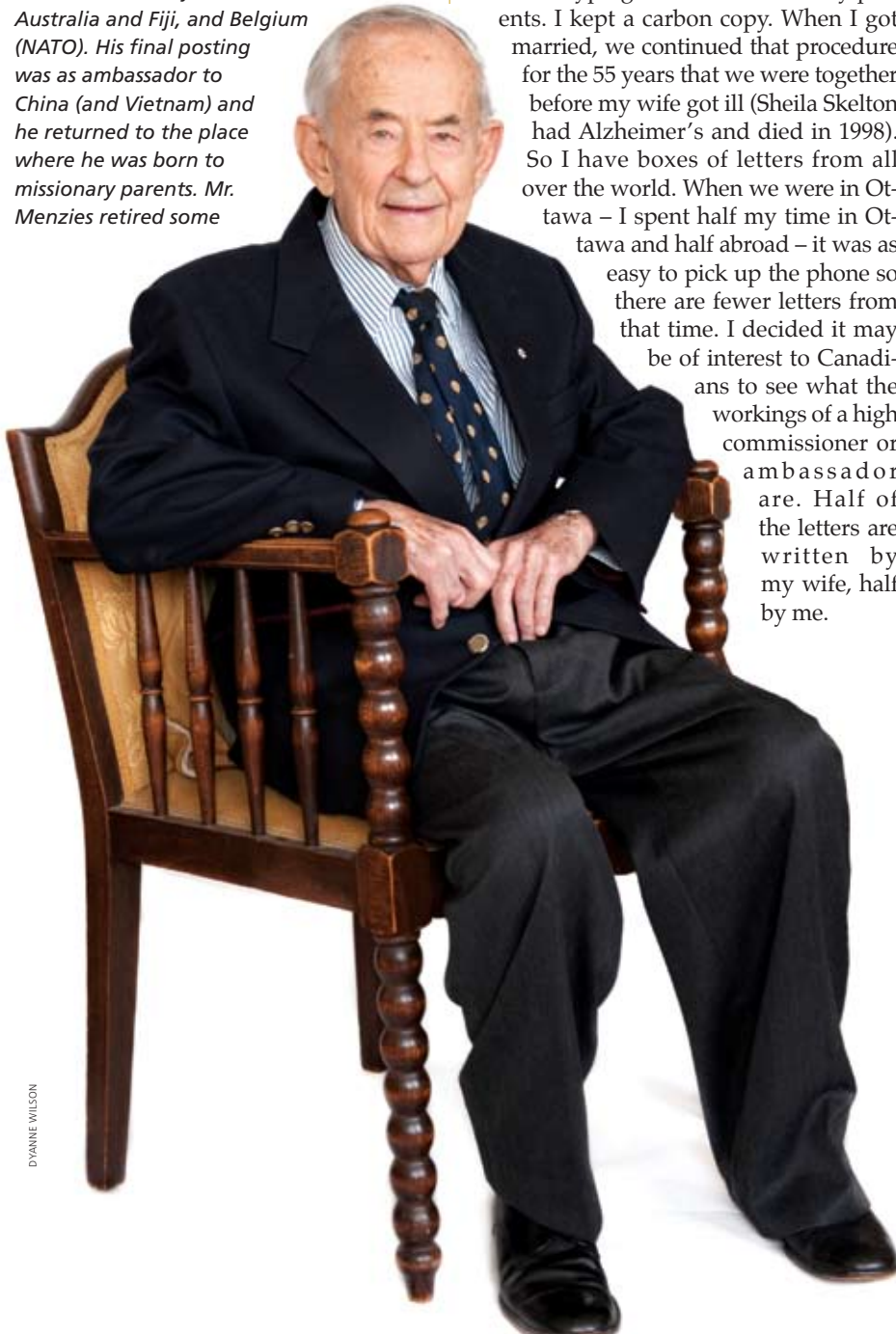
**AM:** It will include Australia and the South Pacific. When I was there, I felt we should be paying more attention to the South Pacific. At the time, they were just establishing a university in Fiji and I got Mr. (Pierre) Trudeau interested in that and we got CIDA to build a science building there. There are about five million people living in the islands of the South Pacific – I'm not talking about Indonesia. I put in a fair amount of effort as I was one of the first high commissioners to Fiji in 1970. I got volunteers, such as dentists, to send their used equipment to supply dentists in Fiji and so on. During my time, communications began to improve.

**DM:** You served under a number of prime ministers. Tell me about them.

**AM:** Yes. I think I got the job in Australia because my name was Menzies and Sir Robert Menzies was prime minister of Australia. Pearson thought a lot of Menzies although he was more conservatively British than Mr. Pearson was. There was Pearson, then Trudeau.

Trudeau came (to Australia) in the spring of 1970 and he was still a bachelor at that time and he sent messages ahead of time to say he wanted to spend his first weekend scuba diving off the Great Barrier Reef. The Australians were not very happy about this because they had had a prime minister, Harold Holt, who was drowned in the ocean near Melbourne. But Mr. Trudeau liked that kind of a challenge.

The Australians sent three very good scuba divers with him and they kept a destroyer with a decompression unit nearby. He was fine and the trip was very successful – he was regarded as an exciting, young bachelor. . . But it was sometimes the escapades that endeared him to the people. A.E. Ritchie was the undersecretary for external affairs and Gordon Robertson was the clerk of the Privy Council at that time and they came along on the trip to talk to their counterparts. I was with Mr. Trudeau at all times and back at the hotel one night we had a working dinner. He excused himself and went to the bathroom



DYANNE WILSON



and then he disappeared and turned up with a most attractive journalist at a nightclub at Kings Cross, dancing cheek to cheek. The Australian security authorities blamed me but I told them

I couldn't go to the bathroom with the prime minister. He got a lot of coverage in the Australian press because of his youth and his desire to see the people, not just the officials.

**DM:** You were in the foreign service for 41 years. What was your best posting?

**AM:** Each of them was different. Australia was undoubtedly the most natural and easy and open one. You would get copies of telegrams and confidentials. We had a very good relationship; they had the same access in Ottawa.

After that, I went as ambassador to NATO. That was my only posting to Europe and it was collective diplomacy there. Brussels is so centrally located you can drive to the Hague or Bonn or Paris in two or three hours on good autobahns.

I enjoyed that experience. I also enjoyed, in a different way, going back to China as my last post abroad because I was born there. I was fortunate in my timing there in that Mao had just died before I arrived and things began to open up quickly. I was also posted in Japan from 1950-1953. I succeeded Dr. Herbert Norman, who was accused of being a Communist. He wasn't as far as his service to the government of Canada went. He was a very good friend of mine – and he was best man at my wedding. (Herbert committed suicide in Cairo in 1957 by jumping off the Swedish Embassy after suspicions of his Communist leanings were revived by a U.S. Senate committee.)

**DM:** What stands out, from 41 years in diplomacy, as your biggest accomplishment?

**AM:** I would say that introducing Canada and Canadians to the emerging South Pacific islands was probably visibly the most important contribution. I also encouraged academic exchanges between Canada and Australia and we now have at least 50 Australian teachers in Canada for a year or two and vice-versa.

There were little successes when I was at NATO. There was a bad earthquake in the Alps of Italy near the Austrian border. At that time, the chiefs of staff of the various NATO armed forces were meeting in Brussels and I said to the chairman of the chiefs of staff that we had a field hospital unit sitting in Germany and I thought it would be great if they deployed it to Italy. He said, 'If you get the permission of the minister of national defence, I'll put the thing in motion.' I phoned the minister and he said 'sure.' So our helicopters moved in and were there for about three months. It was also very successful in Canada because the Italian community here thought it was great.

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**DM:** Joe Clark recently spoke out about the lack of funding going to the foreign service. Do you have any thoughts on that?

**AM:** Well, there's a great deal that can be done by the foreign service but there are certain very immediate demands on mission time. I remember I had a mission meeting in Canberra and the (Canadian) high commissioners from all the countries, from Japan through to India, were there. Those in India, Pakistan, Thailand and Malaysia were complaining that their youngest, most junior officers spent most of their time visiting Canadians who'd been jailed for carrying narcotics. You have to look after all the consular stuff. Those are priorities and certainly businessmen are priorities too.

On the exchange, of information on legislation and on trying get at the roots of problems, or giving aid in certain direction, a lack of funding just limits what you can do. And, if you don't have enough money to get out and travel around the country – say, in a huge country like Russia – you can't do your job as well.

I think right now the priority is obviously on the economic downturn instead of foreign affairs. They will be trying to expand and modernize the outreach of our missions in the United States. I think it is an absolute necessity to strengthen that. We ought to have a small office in many more states than we do to help Canadians get a share of the trade.

**DM:** Looking at the world today, what worries you the most?

**AM:** I think that in the process of trying to control this economic downturn, there may be a tendency to introduce regulatory systems which will create more authoritarian systems of government.

I think if China is dealing with its problems and a central government is trying to counter the drop in export sales, the Communist party will strengthen its position. The same applies in Russia. That's what happens in an economic downturn. One hopes the downturn will not last too long so that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel and return to more private enterprise. A certain amount of regulation is required and I think we've been reasonably successful in that.

**DM:** Anything else you want to add?

**AM:** Nothing except that I'm looking forward to the launching of my book on April 22, in the Pearson Building.



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# Chronicles of a Canadian in Sudan

By James Parker



*"Hail the lowly Dung Beetle of the Sudan.*

*It pushes its miniature version of Mother Earth around as erratically as its human counterpart."*

– Lord Jim of Dilling Town

If one were to look up 'dichotomous' in the dictionary, the definition could simply be a map of Sudan, and a big map it would be, as this country is the size of Ontario and Quebec combined. Never was there ever a more happy-sad, hopeful-despairing, poor-but-with-potential, beautiful-but-parched, smiles-through-tears country in the world.

And to top it off, the number of 'players' in this African country is mind-boggling. There's the government of northern Sudan and its troops, which is supposed to govern the whole. There is the government of the south, the *Janjaweed* militia. There is the Sudan People's Liberation Army troops along with their political arm, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. There is Muslim versus Christian, nomad versus nomad, nomad versus farmer, tribalism, invading forces (such as the Lord's Resistance Army from the Congo, and the People's Defence Force from Uganda.) Finally, there are the NGOs, China and, just to give the stew more flavour, the United Nations.

**W**hat is this Sudan? If you were to think of Sudan at all, and western media were your only source, you'd probably think it consists only of Darfur. Indeed, Darfur is in a world of hurt. As we speak, government-financed nomad militia, known as *Janjaweed*, are terrorizing by murder and rape the Christian settlers of Darfur. Thousands have died and more are dying.

But why has Darfur attracted so much more attention than the problems in the rest of the country? George Clooney and other Hollywood celebrities have taken up Darfur's cause and given it huge visibility. Rallies around the world attract the attention of governments, pressing the United Nations and the African Union to do more. And they should. Sudan's intransigent president, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, has become an expert at applying delaying tactics – holding up supplies while Sudanese people continue to die.

There is, however, another sad story in Sudan, one equally gripping. We all read and hear the term genocide. It has become an empty word that no longer conveys emotion. No pamphlets or magazines, no colourful sound bites, no actors on television holding starving children in their arms can prepare one for the sheer, life-altering reality of a visit to Sudan.

This is the story of the two Sudans – the North and the South – and the reason I choose to tell it to you is that I want Canadians to know that there are other countries in difficult circumstances where your military is serving, in addition to the much focused-on Afghanistan.

**S**udan is a country rich in oil, with 83 per cent of it coming from the south. Cunning China has insinuated itself into Sudan, supplying it with everything from manhole covers to belts, watches, clothing and other less benign items. All this in exchange for oil, which was a fundamental factor in the 25-year genocidal civil war between north and south, now tenuously quiet under a United Nations-brokered peace deal reached in 2005. The various ratios and percentages of the profit-from-oil distribution between north, south and local communities in no small way contribute to this tenuousness. So you see, this part of Sudan is like a layered cake. Add tribalism, nomads killing farmers, tensions between northern and southern troops and fleeing citizens (known as internally displaced persons) moving from village to village.

Into all this, I am dropped.

**F**lash back to innocent and insular little Victoria, B.C. Here lives Jim Parker, former prep school physical education teacher, part-time naval reservist and sometimes writer. He is quite content with his West Coast life of outdoor activities and part-time military duty. But something is niggling at him. Mid-life crisis? Perhaps. Or maybe something more.

He believes that with living a privileged life, as we do in Canada, comes a responsibility and obligation to help others less fortunate. It turns out that that little niggling feeling is the realization that simply writing a cheque to one's favourite



"I especially feel for the little donkies."

charity is too damn easy. On the other hand, he is not an especially altruistic type of fellow.

The questions, then, are, how does one give a real helping hand, and take a bit of personal risk out there in the world, while still generating income? Answer: Look to your naval reserve and the rest of the Canadian military and see what they are doing out in the world and what opportunities there are.

Most Canadians would have trouble coming up with more than one world location (Afghanistan) where Canada is operating in some form or other. Try Sudan, Gaza, several places in Europe, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Congo and at sea in the Persian Gulf, the Atlantic and more. So the Canadian military, stretched thinly and underfunded, is still serving Canada well all around the world.

It so happens that the Canadian Forces is looking for service members to serve in southern Sudan as military observers for the United Nations on Operation

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Sudan's persistent civil strife since independence from Britain in 1956 continues as it became the first nation whose sitting ruler has ever faced an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

In March, the ICC charged that Sudan President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir directed attacks against Darfur "murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property."

The conflict in the western region of Darfur has forced two million people from their homes and has caused as many as 400,000 deaths. Darfur's rich oil deposits have drawn the Islamic government's attacks on this primarily non-Muslim region where China's overpowering presence ranges from investment to armaments.

Sudan is Africa's largest country at 2.5 million square kilometres, with a population of nearly 40 million. Besides oil and petroleum products, it exports minerals and agricultural products – 82 per cent of these exports go to China.

Into Sudan, this huge, complex country in upheaval – and not just in Darfur – the UN has dispatched both peacekeepers and military observers. They remain, though Mr. Bashir responded to the ICC warrant by expelling NGOs that feed, shelter and provide medical care for one million Sudanese.

James Parker's story is a moving, revealing first-hand account by a Canadian who volunteered to serve as a UN military observer, and was sent to central Sudan.

Safari. With Canada's large – for the Canadian military at least – involvement in Afghanistan, opportunities for reservists, and non-army ones at that, to serve around the world now present themselves. Perfect.

First, must convince partner Heather that this mission is not too dangerous, is an opportunity of a lifetime and won't cause her too much extra work (Wrong. The dog walks alone will double.) Tell her it will get me out of her hair and produce extra income to fund renovations. Then, scrape through the fitness and medical tests and various questionnaires. Graduate



from the military observer course at CFB Kingston and, in typically military fashion, wait.

I find out I am to deploy to Khartoum in April and all the paperwork and kit accumulation begins. Piles and piles of both. I'll not recreate the stress of filling out diplomatic paperwork, gathering esoteric equipment for hot, austere climates, packing and bending over for more needles than acupuncturists give their sickest patients. Needless to say, it is true that Canadian military members arrive at their destinations as the best equipped and trained in the world. All the aforementioned is done under the auspices of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command. This is the military organization responsible for all Canadian Forces activity outside Canada. (The entity responsible for military units in Canada is CANCOM.)

My story tries not to be a military or political tale. The following accounts are taken from *The Dung Beetle Diaries*, my journal that I – surprisingly – kept religiously during my time in Africa. Often rough, emotional and clearly written on the spur of the moment, it is a grunt's view. I doubt my views and experiences are unique. All 30 or more of my Canadian colleagues in Sudan would have similar stories to tell. My photographs are the same, mostly rough and unskilled. Occasionally I capture some unique moments just from sheer volume of shots. Picture-taking in Sudan is a risk all its own, as it is illegal to take photos without a permit.

### April 26, 2008 The landing

Officially known as Lieutenant (Navy) Jim Parker, I stand atop the plane's stairs leading down to the baking tarmac at Khartoum International Airport and wonder whether to turn around, get back in the aircraft and return to Frankfurt. It is hot. The people look and dress differently than they do in Victoria



and there is no ocean in sight. What the hell have I gotten myself into? However, with the fortitude and determination taught to me by the Canadian Forces and inherent in my character, I wipe the sweat from my brow and climb down the stairway. The adventure begins.

Operation Safari is Canada's military participation in southern Sudan through the United Nations and is currently in its fourth year. Like other missions, the RCMP, Canadian International Development Agency and Foreign Affairs are involved on the civilian side. It has approximately 34 members with about

24 serving as United Nations Military Observers. Our job as UNMOs, known on this mission by the acronym UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan) is different from being peacekeepers. It is, simply, to interpose ourselves between the armies of northern and southern Sudan. We are unbiased, neutral observers and essentially we report what we see up the chain to various headquarters of the UN. This could be infractions of the comprehensive peace agreement as signed by both sides in the UN-brokered peace agreement. It could be security assessments of villages in our zones that are having problems with nomads or soldiers.

The Canadian team, two of whom are reservists, receive another two-and-a-half weeks of training at UN headquarters in Khartoum. Much of the curriculum we've already done at the peace support training centre at CFB Kingston. Trying to stay awake (while getting over jetlag, acclimating to the heat and being bereft of Tim Horton's coffee) is almost impossible.

I am to be deployed to Dilling, a town in the state of South Kordofan which is to the north of the artificial demarcation line drawn after the signing of the peace accord. The significance of this is that South Kordofan is in the north but allied with the south, making it a primarily Muslim state allied with a mostly Christian southern Sudan. While most of our members are deployed to various team sites around the south, my Canadian colleague, Lieutenant (Navy) Janan Sutherland, and I are going to Dilling.

The town itself has approximately 30,000 people and is centred around a large outdoor market, with stalls, shops and homes made of straw, bits of tin, burlap, plastic and rough brick made from the red earth that is everywhere. It all seems rather temporary with only the mosques giving any impression of permanence. Our UN camp is on the outskirts and consists of 50-60 metal containers rather like sea containers all in nice military rows and, fortunately, air-conditioned. Approximately an acre or two in size, sur-



UN team members with villagers (with James Parker at back, centre-right.) Below: James Parker and "The Beast."

rounded by a shaky fence and guarded by a platoon of Egyptian soldiers, our camp has a cafeteria, showers and toilets and a few other buildings for the 60 or so of us living there. It is all rather austere, but this area, surrounded by the Nuba Mountains is astoundingly beautiful. The sunsets are the most spectacular I have ever seen.

### 15 May 2008—The Beast

**W**ell, three weeks have gone by and here I am in my UN trailer, still surviving. Let me introduce you to my fellow team members: Kay and Chat are from Thailand and are nice chaps who work hard and believe in "face." (Face means to retain one's dignity, self-respect, humility and so forth in the "face" of say, someone else's anger or abuse.) André, Peter, Gabrielle and Morten are from Norway and Denmark. They've found it impossible to leave their Nordic-ness behind and are not happy campers in this



heat. Song comes from Cambodia. Leen and Hank come from Holland. Sigi and Arne, who are Germans, are the best and most disciplined team members. Ahamed, Mousa and Mohammed are from Jordan and Yemen, nice guys and tremendous assets because they speak Arabic. The team leader is Ionell from Romania, who does a tough, thankless job very well. Finally, the best of the lot, young Janan from Canada. They are professionals. They like to joke

around but they take their jobs seriously. I'm on air patrol (Russian MI8 helicopter) next week and am very excited.

I decide to buy a bicycle today. Even the locals are laughing at how beaten-up it is. It is an attractive rust colour because it has not a lick of paint anywhere. When I heft it, it seems to weigh 200-plus pounds and looks as though it was built in the mid-19th century. But what the hell, it'll provide cardio exercise. (My colleagues from below the Equator run daily in the 40-degree heat, no problem.) The bicycle is a much better way of interacting with the locals than sitting high and mighty in our big white SUVs. With an antennae wired with a UN flag, I'll be set.

I see many disturbing things, at least to my delicate sensibilities. Poverty, dirt, refuse everywhere and animals treated harshly as working creatures or left to run wild. I especially feel for the little donkeys, which are the mainstay transportation vehicle, pulling water tanks, cartage wag-



ons and families about the town. All the donkey drivers have a rubber truncheon with which to beat the animal to go faster. I know I am bringing in my urban sensibilities here, but really. So far at least, I don't feel impacted in any psychological sense. Maybe it doesn't happen until you go home? Perhaps it is cumulative? Maybe it takes viewing or participating in something absolutely horrendous?

A big rain-lightning-wind storm is approaching. The containers we sleep in are light and made of tin, or something, for the UN. Mine is all dented and twisted by being bowled over in the last windstorm before I got here.

I decide to ride my bike, dubbed The Beast, home today. It's hard. Either I am w-a-y out of shape, which is very possible, or I cannot function in this heat. Or I've never ridden in long pants and army boots. Or there is one long hill. Or the bike is made of cast iron. Or the brakes are stuck on. Or – the one I prefer – I am just not used to this style of bicycle. I will have to take it back to the bike shop, which consists of tools and a bike stand on the dirt, under a burlap awning, for a new crank arm. The right one is wonky and pretty near breaks my ankle every revolution. Still, I get lots of waves, thumbs-ups and laughs as I sweat and wobble my way home. The bicycle is a big hit, outfitted as it is with UN flag and antennae. We are always short of vehicles anyway. I ride The Beast throughout the tukol (clusters of huts) neighbourhoods, always garnering a few laughs and attempts at conversations. Some children run away screaming.

### June 1, 2008– The Kids of Sudan

**W**ow! June already. A thought: Looking at the encroaching village tukols, I am reminded of the growth of Toronto towards Barrie, my home town, destroying and devouring everything in its path. These neighbourhoods look more benign because the tukols are made of straw, wood, dirt and red brick. One of my Danish colleagues says the earth is red with the blood of the Sudanese caught in the war. However, just like home, villagers consume all the local resources and must go farther and farther afield to gather materials.

Another thought: Janan and I go into the village to get my flat tire repaired. Janan buys a table for his quarters. While I wait, I just stand there trying to take it all in. I must remember everything.

Wandering soldier (Sudan People's Liberation Army?) with an AK-47 slung over shoulder and full ammo pouches. Tailors using treadle sewing machines. Bike repair shops set up in the middle of dirt roads. Garbage everywhere. The heat. Cute girls with trays of sweets for sale balanced on their heads. And of course, the tall, slim, beautiful Sudanese women with their languorous gaits. I know I will never ever be able to adequately tell this story.

I ride The Beast through a nearby encampment of straw tukols. This is the equivalent to a Canadian suburb,

"The children of Sudan  
and Dilling make my  
adventure. For the  
most part, They  
are dressed in clean,  
pressed, if sometimes  
ragged, clothing. They  
wear brilliant smiles  
and are allowed to live  
independent lives, unlike  
in Canada where we  
stifle our children with  
organization and security."

complete with shops (made of bits of canvas, plastic and burlap), tea and coffee klatches, dirt soccer fields and 'handraulic' water pumps for the women to fill their head-carried containers. Of course it's hot – in the high 30s. However, both The Beast and I are rusty so we set out in the heat for a wee tour. I always enjoy getting on the ground. These two-wheeled excursions remind me why I am in Sudan, so I saddle up and follow the aimless and rutted paths that meander everywhere. I throw out my few bits and pieces of Arabic and receive great smiles, waves and better English in return. Often I stop, especially around the water pumps, just to watch and practice my Arabic. When they find out I'm from Canada, the smiles grow even wider. "Ah, Canada. Great country, Canada. We are very happy you are here to help us. Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto – we know all about your great country!"

It is, of course, easier to engage the men and children, as the women are a bit more cautious. Still, I am able to elicit quite a few smiles from them, especially when I try to balance a water container on my head and am not even able to lift it up. When I do get it settled on my head with their assistance, I spill it all, forcing myself to refill it at the pump. Still, I think they think I am a good sport or possibly a dumb *kawaja* (foreigner or white person) who doesn't know any better. Watching the women work enralls and saddens me. These beautiful, wonderful women do not rate high on the scale in families or society. There are, however, glimmerings of change as more women become educated at the university level. But it will be a very long time.

The children of Sudan and Dilling make my adventure. For the most part, they are dressed in clean, pressed, if sometimes ragged, clothing. They wear brilliant smiles and are allowed to live independent lives, unlike in Canada where we stifle our children with organization and security. The ones not in school are enterprising and hard-working. This includes shoe-shine boys with modified oil containers holding their supplies, donkey cart drivers, plastic bottle scroungers, little street merchants, moochers, herds-boys and more. They play soccer on rough dirt fields and make skeletal goal posts of branch limbs. Their soccer balls are so worn, they are held together with string.

So The Beast and I are bouncing along, round the corner of a straw fence, and there are some children playing in the dirt. They don't have Barbie dolls or Tonka toys. Their parents are not watching indulgently as they ride plastic tricycles around or suck juice from juice boxes. Just half a dozen or so kids playing in the dirt, some of them looking after wee babies. The fantastic ingenuity of their homemade toys amazes me. One boy proudly pulls a "lorry" around on a string. It's manufactured from bits of wire, bottle caps for wheels, empty matchboxes for lights and bits of coloured wire and string for "bling." He doesn't seem to mind that he doesn't have an iPod or light sabre, although I am sure he would love those as well. I ride on after a bit – after his big brother, who is in the army, pumps up The Beast's rear tire. I'm thinking about the huge dichotomy that exists between our two societies and if ever it could be shrunk somewhat to make things a bit fairer for all.



A sandstorm approaches.

### June 29, 2008 AT school in Sudan

I finally hand out school supplies today to impoverished elementary school girls, near Dilling University. It's a dirty school that's falling apart but smiling, laughing girls look at us from the windows and mill around us in the yard. I hope we can help them with more supplies. Is this the correct way to go about helping? I'm not sure. But it feels good. The principal is pretty emotional. I am embarrassed because he thanks me as if it's all my doing and it isn't. I have to go back this afternoon to hand out the supplies. I don't want to – do not want to hand out one little crayon or pencil or something to one kid. They should keep the supplies in a cupboard and dole them out as needed. We give them painfully little. It hurts to watch their gratitude. I hope my friends will help out.

These first supplies, probably three to four cardboard boxes, consist of the simple things needed by students: paper, pens and pencils, erasers, and so forth, and were left in our storage container by, I think, the previous Canadian UNMOs who had run out of time. In our military observer team, only the Canadians and the Dutch are fortunate enough to have had their militaries organize mail delivery service and it's huge for morale. However, the Canadians are restricted in what can be sent via the Canadian Forces postal service because priority is given to military equipment over personal things. So humanitarian supplies are a no-go, although we are able to sneak some through, thanks to family and friends. Success.

Every day, we see the children walking to school. Every school – boys and girls are segregated – has its distinct uniform and always these uniforms are clean and pressed. I see multiple children on one bicycle. I see little girls walking to school

with plastic chairs from home balanced on their heads, because their school has no furniture. I see older girls laughing and giggling with their heads together. If I close my eyes, these could be the sounds of children in any school in Canada. The problem is, I can't close my eyes.

A marked difference is the family of nine that hangs around outside our camp fence. Every morning, as the sun rises, they arrive, ready to collect the empty plastic bottles we'd thrown over the fence for them. Occasionally the mother is with them, always pregnant, always smiling. Where do they live? What do they do with the bottles? How can they stand the heat out there in the open? Why are they always laughing and smiling? Why are they so amazed that I befriend their dog, Boutros? We give them old clothing and other items, which we are fairly certain they will sell in the market.

Back to the plastics, that wonderful legacy left to the Sudanese from the west-





"We give them painfully little. It hurts to watch their gratitude."



In Sudan, taking pictures is risky business.

ern world. The plastic bag and the plastic bottle are the most obvious and enduring legacy of the modern world. They're left to lie everywhere, collecting on fences, in corners and in piles of dirt.

The other legacy of Sudan, the children, are its future. But this sad country with its wonderful children needs help. Nobody could visit and not feel the way I do. I call it happy-sad. Their huge white-toothed smiles, which light up their faces, make you happy to see, yet also make you incredibly sad.

### August 20, 2008 Jasmine and bullet holes

Our joint monitoring teams always includes a national monitor from each side, a language assistant, patrol leader and two or more United Nations Military Observers. Our team is on patrol in our white 4 x 4s. We know it is going to rain and we are far away from

camp. Did I say rain? This is not rain as we know it in Canada. Here, in the rainy season, what pours from the sky is a river gone vertical. Mix this with roads that in Canada we wouldn't even describe as wide trails and you have morass, which is a word I have always wanted to use but not experience. Thank goodness for power winches and GPS.

It is a wild day. Two villages, two investigations. Wonderful kids at the school, as usual. They come running out to look at the *kawaja* and laugh at my Arabic. They are what this UN mission is, or should be, about. We do okay until we run into a flash-flooded river. I make it across, with my yelping, pessimistic Jordanian navigator at my side, screaming that we are going to drown. I use the term navigator loosely, as he still swears we are 20 miles off target when we arrive in the village. But it is a close-call. Our team leader gets stuck mid-river in his vehicle. It's fun to watch everyone bail out and see

all the water pour out the doors. It would be perfect if a fish or two came out as well, like in a Hollywood comedy.

I turn around to winch him out and get badly stuck myself in the beach sand. I don't follow my own tracks back – dummy. Have to wait hours for a tractor to pull me out. The team is wonderful – two Jordanians, one Romanian, one Thai, three Sudanese and one Canadian – with great spirits, work ethic and humour.

Anyway, so much for being the expert winter driver ("Driving in mud? Ha! This is nothing compared to driving in the winter snows of Canada.")

The essence of this story for me is the jasmine flower overleaf. (I tape a now truly-wilted bloom in my journal). The school buildings we investigate all have bricked-up windows. Why? Turns out the Sudanese Armed Forces (North) barricaded themselves in them during the earlier years of fighting. Consequently there are bullet holes everywhere, inside and out. As I walked over to one building, I notice a wonderful fragrance in the air and petals on the ground. "Jasmine," I am told. Oh, it is such a great smell – calming, sweet, happy. You can still smell it on these pages of my journal. And here I am counting bullet holes, while standing on a carpet of jasmine and enveloped in the most peaceful fragrance. How sad. How very sad. Once again, the Sudanese dichotomy.

### My Canadian colleague's school

I was fortunate to serve with Lieutenant (Navy) Janan Sutherland. Janan is in his late 20s, originally from Windsor, Ontario and currently employed as an instructor at the Canadian Forces recruit school in St. Jean, Quebec. He is a reason you should be proud of the Canadian Forces, and he is partly responsible for why its members rise to the top of every mission they are on. Quiet, super-competent, honest, humble and a natural leader, Janan was good company, especially so because he saw in me an older, sage-like personality and therefore gave me more respect than I deserved. I milked it for all it was worth.

We often made patrols to outlying villages, well off road and far away from our team site. The purpose was usually to do security assessments to see if the villages were having problems with banditry, roving soldiers, nomads stealing cattle and so forth. This day we ended up in Kortala, the home village of one of our interpret-

ers. Although set in beautiful countryside, Kortala itself is fairly barren, with straw huts, dilapidated shops, some rough stone buildings, wandering animals, no electricity and several broken hand-powered water pumps. In other words, it's a normal Sudanese village of several hundred, perhaps a thousand, people of the Nuba tribe who are dependent on the crops that surround it.

Lt. Sutherland and one of our language assistants, Alnoor Haloof, had become friends over the duration of our tour. Alnoor is a bright, educated and articulate man and a local historian, whom our team could not do without. Upon arrival in his home of Kortala, Alnoor took Janan on a walkabout and apparently one of their destinations was the girls' school. You should immediately rid your mind of the picture of a Canadian school. Think instead of three classrooms for 200 girls. One is under a large tree, the second in a straw tukol and the third is in a one-room building of rough stone, all within a spear's throw of each other. And know as well, that no government representative, NGO or UN organization has visited the village in 60 years to help with their educational needs. This young Canadian officer does what every Canadian military member does while on deployment. He asks what he can do to help.

"I'm not a doctor or teacher," he says to Alnoor, "but there must be something I can do."

"School supplies are desperately needed," replies Alnoor. And so it began.

It began as a request from Janan to his family back in Canada for help to purchase school supplies for the Kortala girls school. Then it started to grow – and grow.

The Canadians raised more than \$10,000 and, a few weeks later, Janan realized that his project has gone beyond the school supplies level. The word had spread back home and the money kept coming in. Everybody knows the good man that Janan is and that was reason enough to donate.

Again he asked the question of Alnoor, "What should I do?"

Alnoor replied, "Build a school." So they did.

While maintaining his job as a military observer, and doing it better than most, young Lt. Sutherland oversaw the construction of two classrooms and an office to be built onto the existing one-room stone school house in faraway Kortala, a four-hour-plus off-road drive in an SUV. If he needed information, or needed to pass



"We give them painfully little. It hurts to watch their gratitude."



Lieutenant (Navy) Janan Sutherland "is one reason to be proud of the Canadian Forces."

some information on, he'd make a cellular call to a neighbouring village and a relative of Alnoor's would drive the message to phoneless Kortala. Lt. Sunderland's team consulted school elders, drew up plans, hired an itinerant stone mason, ordered supplies and planned celebrations.

There were at least three major obstacles. It was at this point summer and Janan was deploying back to Canada at the end of October. Managing a project from a distance was difficult. And, most importantly, harvest season is about to begin. That meant all the men folk, tractors and wagons would be out in the fields to reap sorghum. Still, the villagers realized that the education of their young women is of paramount importance and were de-

termined to find a way around the issue.

In the villages and farm areas of the Sudan, tractors are of immense value and importance. Families will share them and also use them as their 'go-to-village' vehicle, as having both a car and a tractor is unheard of. It was quite common to see whole families riding on a tractor, all laughing and falling about and struggling to hold on as father veered the vehicle around the huge potholes of the non-roads. These important tractors and their wagons would be needed to make the two-day drive down to Dilling to pick up the special construction supplies not available near Kortala.

The issue then became how not to disrupt the harvest work. In this country, no



harvest meant no food for the village. Ultimately, a few of the men, with two tractors and wagons, made the long trek to Dilling in the fall. Tie rod, angle iron, and lumber were all loaded. Janan paid the owner of the hardware business and the Kortala men headed for a well-deserved cup of chi. They would make the long and rough drive back the next day. The supplies would then be unloaded, the tractors and men would go back to the fields and the stone mason and his mates would begin their work.

Towards the end of our deployment, we made a final patrol to Kortala. We had some idea that a celebration was planned for Janan, who was already blushing with shyness despite being several hours away yet from the village. He really wanted all this to be low-key, especially because he felt his own contribution to the project was relatively minor. (In addition to managing the project and raising the funds, Janan also donated a large sum himself.) We had two vehicles packed with military observers and Alnoor and his family and they bounced heavily as we navigated the rough countryside. Several hours of off-roading and we arrived at Kortala. The village was turned out for us, less the workers in the fields, for which they apologized. ("The celebrations are not as big as we would like for you, but you see . . .")

A wonderful lunch. (They watched us eat.) Music. (Instruments made from animal tusks and horns.) Dancing. (Lots and lots of wonderful Nuba Mountain tribal dancing.) There were presentations of bowls made from gourds, hand-woven mats and decorated ostrich eggs. Inspections of the half-built school (with everyone trailing Janan and listening as he made appropriate comments), speeches from the elders, beautiful singing from giggling school girls, exchanges of items and return thank-you speeches rounded out the day. It concluded with more dancing, this time including the guests. During the ceremonies, Janan made a fine speech and presented a plaque with the names of his family and all the donors on it. It will be mounted above the school's front door.

As the sun set, the day wound down – and we had several hours driving back to Dilling ahead of us. Alnoor is considered a hero for bringing this wonderful gift to the village. And young Janan? Well, the villagers think he was sent by God or Allah. Truly. How else to explain the arrival of this young Canadian and his subsequent good works? Regardless, every villager now knows lots about Canada and thinks

every Canadian is like Janan Sutherland. Best of all, the young girls of Kortala won't have to sit under the village tree for classes when their new school is completed.

### January 2009 Back in Canada, looking back

There are so many questions – questions I'm tempted to ask but also tempted to leave safely unanswered. Is the Sudanese government serving its people well? No. The Khartoum-based government has not put as much effort into making the comprehensive peace agreement function as it should. There is a lot of money pumped into Sudan from various countries and organizations. Where is it?

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express what I have  
seen and experienced in  
The Sudan. If I could  
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us who lived Sudan feel  
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from your belly. It would  
make you want to hop  
on the next plane over  
There and, at the same  
time, it would make you  
want to run away.*

Should the United Nations be in Sudan or specifically, southern Sudan? Is it doing a good job? The UN is doing a good job of providing local employment, but that is just a side benefit of it being there. I thought the UN was supposed to support those of us in the field. If so, it did an incredibly poor job, at least from the grunt-at-ground-level perspective. And what happened to all the reports we wrote and sent up the chain? We never saw any response or action from higher headquarters – unless we filled out a form incorrectly. The UN seems like this huge

monolith that is so cumbersome and political that it survives by feeding on itself. We need something tight, small, efficient, responsive, quick that is on the ground and knowledgeable about all issues.

Should the non-governmental organizations be there as well, and are they doing a good job? My impression was that the NGOs suffered from the same problems as the UN and could have also benefited from the same solutions. Once we got the local employees of the non-government organizations to sit down and talk to each other, it sounded like great things were going to happen. I left before I saw this outcome. The answers to these questions are beyond my pay grade, and probably belong in a book. There is no question that I met some fantastic individuals – men and women with whom it was an honour and privilege to work. Some will remain lifelong friends. As always, the best part of any deployment, training or course is the people you meet.

The Sudanese people are simply and purely wonderful. They just want and need a helping hand. The potential in their country is huge. Tourism, fuel exports, crop production, manufacturing (clothing, metalwork, etc.) But, collectively, they need to develop the habit of looking to themselves and their own resources, rather than automatically looking to the government.

I wish I could adequately express what I have seen and experienced in the Sudan. If I could describe what those of us who lived Sudan feel in our souls. It would make you weep. It would make you laugh deep from your belly. It would make you want to hop on the next plane over there and, at the same time, it would make you want to run away.

Did I say dichotomous? I did learn a few lessons. I learned to not preach when I came home to Canada. People don't want to hear it, even if they ask. I learned that I can do something beyond writing a cheque to my favourite charity. I learned that there is beauty and hope in the saddest places. I learned that Canadian military members are, indeed, respected around the world. I learned lots of frustrating and disgusting things about the UN and a few good things. I learned much about myself, some good and some not so good. I discovered that I do have passion. I learned that despite coming home at the end of October, the essence of Sudan is still in my blood. Simply put, I fell in love with Africa and its people.

Jim Parker is a Victoria writer.

# The great non-existent Bhutan conspiracy

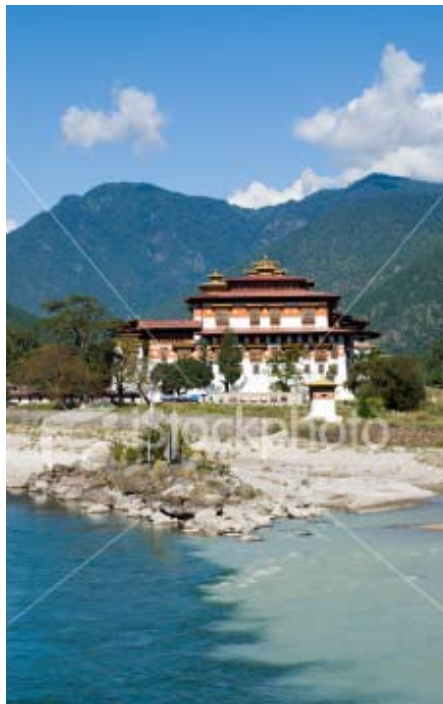
By George Fetherling

James Grady is a thriller writer (one of the “50 to read before you die”, according to the *Daily Telegraph* in London) whose new CIA conspiracy yarn, *Mad Dogs*, has quickly made its mark with readers — and with Hollywood as well. But it is unlikely to surpass the success of his *Six Days of the Condor*, published in 1974. The following year, that book became a Robert Redford movie called *Three Days of the Condor*, its time-span obviously reduced by half so as to speed up the action. Either way, it's quite a fine thriller, despite one enormous glitch in the plot.

The protagonist is a low-level CIA employee in New York whose job is to read all new spy thrillers as they are published. He is to look for possible security leaks relating to company techniques and gadgets. But he also stays alert for tricks and hardware that have come straight from the authors' imaginations but which the boys in Langley might consider copying. He begins to grow suspicious that so many spy tales are being translated into Arabic but not into any of the western European languages. His curiosity leads him to uncover an illicit CIA programme designed to safeguard America's supply of Middle Eastern oil.

Mr. Grady should have known, as other authors do, that the question of which works gets translated in which foreign countries is purely as a matter of chance and is not susceptible to logical explanation. One of my recent books, to use the easiest example at hand, was published in Japanese (not unusual in the east) and also in Czech and Bulgarian, but not in, say, French, Spanish or German. There was no conspiracy here. The results were simply a matter of which Canadian publisher happened to have once had a drink with opposite numbers from Prague and Sofia. In modern times, introducing publishers and their editors to colleagues in other countries has largely been the purpose of the Frankfurt Book Fair (which was founded in 1480).

Still, if one were prone to crackpot theories, one might be forgiven for suspecting that there is indeed a Canadian conspiracy involving Bhutan, the ruggedly mountainous and predominately Buddhist state of only a million or fewer people, bordered



by the topmost reaches of India on the east, south and west and by China on the north. A relatively short distance to the west lies the somewhat similar (but Hindu) state of Nepal, which is far better known, more deeply understood and more often visited. For until recently, tourism in Bhutan was actually forbidden, and only a small handful of English-language books, or portions of books, were given over to the strange little place it is today. Most of these were guide books, aimed at the sort of hardy travellers who have already had their fill of Tibet.

When *Beyond the Sky and the Earth: A Journey into Bhutan* by Jamie Zeppa of Toronto was published by Doubleday Canada in 1999, it drew an immense amount of publicity because of its sheer novelty as well as its style. The small portion of the public concerned with the region was primed for the book's appearance by the way Bhutan was losing its Shangri-la image in the face of democracy, television and the Internet.

Canadian volunteers have been going to Bhutan for years. They have helped the society, which is wretchedly poor, in improving its medical and educational institutions, for example. One such hu-

Our Books section provides a comprehensive look at books on Bhutan, Tibet and philanthropy. Here is a list of the 16 titles mentioned.

*Mad Dogs*, James Grady

*Six Days of the Condor*, James Grady

*Beyond the Sky and the Earth: A Journey into Bhutan*, Jamie Zeppa

*Butter Tea at Sunrise: A Year in the Bhutan Himalaya*, Britta Das

*Under the Holy Lake: A Memoir of Eastern Bhutan*, Ken Haigh

*China's Great Train: Beijing's Drive West and the Campaign to Remake Tibet*, Abrahm Lustgarten

*The Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux

*Ghost Train to the Eastern Star: On the Tracks of the Great Railway Bazaar*, Paul Theroux

*The Great Railway Bazaar*, Paul Theroux

*Saint Jack*, Paul Theroux

*The London Embassy*, Paul Theroux

*Half Moon Street*, Paul Theroux

*The Elephanta Suite*, Paul Theroux

*A Blue Hand: The Beats in India*, Deborah Baker

*A Place Within: Rediscovering India*, M.G. Vassanji

*Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*, Robert T. Payton and Michael P. Moody

manitarian is Britta Das, a Toronto physiotherapist, who returned home with such striking photographs of Bhutanese life that Jamie Zeppa suggested she write a book to go with them. The result is *Butter Tea at Sunrise: A Year in the Bhutan Himalaya*, published recently by Dundurn Press (\$24.99 paper).

The latest evidence of what even sinister and cynical-minded people could view only as a most benevolent conspiracy indeed is Ken Haigh's book *Under the Holy Lake: A Memoir of Eastern Bhutan* (\$29.99 paper), which lists Ms. Zeppa's work in its wild-ranging bibliography of books on Bhutan in various languages. That his book in fact has such a bibliography is illustrative of Mr. Haigh's publisher,



the University of Alberta Press, whose strength (other than informing readers about all aspects of Alberta) is the way it often tries to unite high-quality prose with scholarly worth to reinforce that third stream of publishing: sophisticated books for educated lay people, works meatier than most so-called trade titles without being so dryly incomprehensible as many academic ones. The U of A books are usually interesting for their design as well.

Mr. Haigh, another Ontarian, spent two years teaching in Bhutan, returning 40 pounds lighter with “an infection of giardia, head lice, some lovely flea bite scars, and a tapeworm” — and a love of the place that compelled him to go back for a further year. His book is knowledgeable, thoughtful, humane and stylish.

### The Dalai Lama's worst nightmare

From his place of exile in northern India, the Dalai Lama, who sometimes seems to be the Martha Stewart of eastern spirituality, must have had to confront the facts in 2006, admitting to himself that the jig was finally up for the dream of Tibetan independence. What took place in July that year was the opening of the Sino-Tibetan railway's final stretch, connecting Golmud in Qinghai Province to Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. As Golmud already had a link to Xining, also in Qinghai, and crack trains had long been running from Xining to Beijing, the probable geopolitical future of Tibet was now clear. Tibetans would be moving en masse into China while a great many more Chinese would move to Tibet. In time, the culture and habits of the People's Republic must finally Sinoise those of what, since China's invasion in 1951, has officially been called the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Such is part of the thesis that Abraham Lustgarten, a writer for *Fortune* in New

York, pursues in *China's Great Train: Beijing's Drive West and the Campaign to Remake Tibet* (Random House of Canada, \$29), in which he focuses at considerable length on four individuals. One is a teenager through whose small community the train now runs; another is Renzin Tashi, a shopkeeper in Lhasa who finds that his clientele is now largely Chinese.

Representing the other side of the coin is Zhang Luxin, of China's Ministry of Railways, who devoted 30 years to furthering plans for the proposed line, which had its origins in 1955. That is, at the same historical moment at which Dwight Eisenhower in the U.S. was pushing ahead with own dream of the massive and massively destructive Interstate highway system. President Eisenhower's intention was to use the freeways to evacuate American cities if and when Soviet bombers appeared in the sky. By contrast, Zhang and his masters wanted only to tighten their grip on Tibet. To this ambition, more recent Chinese leaders have added the dream of other new lines that would open Central Asia to Chinese goods while taking out oil from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and the Muslim east more generally. The endeavour will cover 21,000 kilometres and cost at least US\$100 billion.

None of that will be easy, to judge from the experience of Cheng Guodong, the last of Mr. Lustgarten's symbolic quartet. Mr. Cheng was charged with figuring out how to lay track across 550 kilometres of permafrost, equal to less than a third of the line overall. Other engineering challenges met during construction of the Golmud-Lhasa line related to the fact that 80 per cent of this leg is through country more than 4,000 metres in height and in one place, 5,072 metres. Of the many tunnels, one close to Lhasa comes in at 4,264 metres. There are 675 bridges as well.

Mr. Lustgarten is much too newspaperly

a writer to carry off the use of four disparate personalities to relate the story he has to tell. As for politics and economics, the book — the literary equivalent of an engineering problem, as all serious non-fiction must be — is pretty thin on subtlety and nuance, as thin as the air in the Himalaya that compels passengers to reach for the oxygen bottles supplied by the Ministry of Railways.

Writers of travel narrative, inhabiting a semi-fictional realm, often do better than reporters at this type of fact-gathering assignment, because they come with the ability to reveal rather than just record. One example: Paul Theroux, who in the 1970s made rail travel a popular topic again with such influential books as *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975) and *The Old Patagonian Express* (1979). Prior to the former book's appearance, he was considered a not terribly important novelist, if admittedly a prolific one. Now, slowly closing in on his 70th birthday, he returns to the scope and sweep of those early travel books with *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star: On the Tracks of the Great Railway Bazaar* (McClelland & Stewart, \$34.99). His itinerary begins in London and takes him through such places as Iran, India, Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and Russia. Many of these countries are ones he described 30-some years ago. Revisiting them now, he is able to suss out how in the interim virtually all of them have changed beyond recognition politically, economically and culturally.

What hasn't changed a whit is the persona he uses on the page. He always has come across as a sourpuss, a dour traveller and a sometimes disputatious one as well. When you come right down to it, the voice that narrates Mr. Theroux's books (which is not necessarily the same as Mr. Theroux's in-person voice) often seems impatient with foreigners. In travel narratives,



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just as in real-life travelling, this can be a serious handicap indeed. This spirit lives on in the new book when, for example, he gets into a bad argument with the novelist and Nobel Prize laureate Orhan Pamuk in Istanbul. Or when he describes a week-long drunk while heading homeward aboard the Trans-Siberian Express. (I once had a similar experience when I took the trip in the other direction, from Moscow to Beijing. One had to drink because there was precious little food on the eastbound Russian-run train, a complete contrast to the westbound Chinese one.)

In any event, I have always thought Mr. Theroux's finest travel writing is to be found in his fiction rather than his travel tales. One need only compare the Singapore described in *The Great Railway Bazaar* to the one created, refined and defined in his novel *Saint Jack*. Has anyone else ever caught the essential feel of Margaret Thatcher's London as he did in the short stories that make up *The London Embassy* and the novella *Half Moon Street*? You can see this strange process again by comparing his most recent work of fiction, *The Elephant Suite* (McClelland & Stewart, \$32.99), with the way India is conveyed in *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star*.

The point, I suppose, is that those concerned with foreign affairs often stand to gain by reading, not guidebooks, but the type of travel narrative that serious literary people, ones as different as Anthony Trollope, Mark Twain and Evelyn Waugh, have enjoyed writing as a sideline.

Two other new examples also dealing with India come to mind. They are further indications that the country seems poised to become, at least among the authors, journalists and commentators of western Europe and in North America, the most written about and "explained" nation-state on earth, thanks to the combination of its democratic traditions and startling new economic power.

*A Blue Hand: The Beats in India* by Debrah Baker (Penguin Group Canada, \$16.95 paper) is notionally about the complicated and somewhat romantic visits to the sub-continent by Allen Ginsberg and a number of his fellow Beat writers from the U.S. beginning in the early 1960s. Just below its narrative surface, however, is an exploration of the strange hold that the very idea of India has had on western culture, especially pop culture. Has the common view of India — land of elusive inner harmony, spiritual questing and shameful poverty; a place of such great natural and man-made beauty, scarred by so many conflicts

rooted in caste and religion — affected the reality? Yes, it seems. Ms. Baker (who has been mentioned often of late as the editor of Barack Obama's books) does a fine job of, not telling us all this, but allowing us to discover it.

Then there is M.G. Vassanji, the top-rated Canadian novelist who won the first-ever Giller Prize (and then a second one, and, subsequently, it would appear, all other literary honours and awards). He was born in Kenya in 1950 and grew up mostly in Canada, and did not set foot in his ancestral homeland until 1993. His book *A Place Within: Rediscovering India* (McClelland & Stewart, \$34.95) is an account of that and later visits. It mixes memory and identity in that way so important in all diasporic writing. It is a book with much useful information, a good number of sharp insights and a great deal of restrained passion.

#### And finally, tis better to give than to receive

**U**nderstanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission (Indiana University Press, US\$24.95) is a cogent and graceful introduction to a subject of abiding interest. It is one of those books that distills the experience of a long and distinguished career in the field.

Robert T. Payton, who shares authorship with Michael P. Moody, a sociologist who was once his student, is a retired professor of "philanthropic studies" at Indiana University, where he was director of its Center on Philanthropy as well. He has been U.S. ambassador to a developing African country, a college and university president and, tellingly, the head of the Exxon Education Foundation. So he knows the sector as both recipient and donor and has seen at close range how it can help alleviate social ills so stubborn that they often seem insoluble.

One thrust of the book is the history of philanthropy. Another is an examination of how the practice, whether through public policy or private foundations, is shaped by the national culture, whether political or religious, of the individual doing the giving. He does not engage in the moralistic nagging so often found in what is written about the subject. Rather, he is practical, calm, open-minded and outward looking. The book is, well, a gift to its readers.

George Fetherling's novel *Walt Whitman's Secret* appears later this year (Random House Canada).





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## The woman behind Gershwin's career

By Betty Nygaard King

**M**ost of us have heard and enjoyed George Gershwin's world-famous piano concerto *Rhapsody in Blue*. The jazz rhythms and evocative melodies are so widely loved that it is easy to forget that, at one time, jazz was new and suspect, and George Gershwin was unknown as a serious composer. It was an expatriate Canadian singer in New York who introduced Gershwin to the classical music world that he soon took by storm.

The mezzo-soprano Eva Gauthier was ahead of her time. Born in Ottawa in 1885, she was the daughter of a civil engineer with the Dominion Observatory, and the niece of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Lady Zoë Laurier. After studying voice in France with the Lauriers' help, she toured the United Kingdom and Canada with fellow Canadian soprano Dame Emma Albani, and became the protégé of Lord Strathcona, Canada's high commissioner in London. A stay in Java followed; it was here that her love of exotic music was formed. In 1915, she settled in New York where she became known for premiering new songs in her annual concerts in Aeolian Hall.

Gauthier's concert on Nov. 1, 1923 was an historical event because she did what no musician had dared do before but has since become commonplace. She announced she would perform American jazz and popular songs along with serious classical works – all in a concert hall reserved for classical music. She hoped to elevate her audience's respect for jazz, which to that point was denounced and feared in many quarters. She entitled her experimental concert "Recital of ancient and modern music for voice."

Gauthier, clad in a black gown worn back-to-front, began her concert with songs of previous centuries by Bellini and Purcell, and by living composers like France's Darius Milhaud and Hungary's Bela Bartok. Then, the visibly nervous George Gershwin took his seat at the piano – the first time the 25-year-old had played a formal concert. He was an experienced rehearsal accompanist and Broadway composer, but no singer had yet taken him or his songs seriously enough to engage him for such a performance. Gauthier and Gershwin began with Irving Berlin's jazz song *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Gershwin soon abandoned his sheet music in

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favoured spontaneous jazz rhythms and melodic improvisations. After more jazz songs by Jerome Kern and Walter Donaldson, Gauthier introduced Gershwin's own jazz compositions *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise*, *Innocent Ingenue Baby*, and *Swanee*, the latter already made famous by Al Jolson. The audience then demanded an encore; Gauthier and Gershwin obliged with his *Do It Again*.

The legacy of this single concert has lasted 85 years, because the popular big band leader, Paul Whiteman, was in the



Eva Gauthier

audience. He knew Gershwin's reputation, and decided then and there to commission him to compose a piano concerto. The result was the now-famous *Rhapsody in Blue*, which innovatively blended jazz rhythms with classical forms. Gershwin went on to pen the masterpieces *Concerto in F*, *American in Paris*, and *Porgy and Bess*. Eva Gauthier's belief in the value of American popular song had launched the career of this beloved composer.

Eva Gauthier and George Gershwin repeated their experimental concert in Boston in 1924 and London, England the following year.

By the end of her career, Gauthier had sung over 180 world premieres. Critics and composers praised her, calling her a pioneer. For introducing Gershwin to the concert world, and for making popular music respectable, she occupies an important place in 20th-century music history.

Betty Nygaard King is a subject editor with the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* in Ottawa.



# How do U choose a wine 2 go with food?

**E**very once and a while, I do a little of what I call emergency wine support. This typically involves receiving a phone call or text message from a friend in desperate need of on-the-spot wine advice: "I'm at the LCBO right now, and we're having lamb burgers with mushrooms and provolone cheese tonight. What do I buy?" I'm always honoured my friends seek my advice, and I enjoy being a sommelier whether I'm engaging tables at Beckta, or responding to a text about whether to go with the grenache or the petite syrah.

There are still many restaurant guests who are afraid to pick a wine despite a growing level of food and wine knowledge and sophistication. People feel unprepared to make their own choice, and the resulting pressure detracts from what should be a relaxing dining experience. What's a guest to do?

First, don't be afraid to ask for help. I'm always entertained when I overhear diners whisper that they don't know a certain wine, and then politely decline assistance. Not only do more and more restaurants now have sommeliers and wine-educated serving staff, but the number of restaurants that promote caring, intelligent service is increasing. Wine and wine-food pairing play important roles in this, so spend your valuable time and hard-earned money in establishments which not only understand this, but are passionate about it. Ask the servers working in those restaurants about the menu and trust the sommelier. When you find restaurants providing excellent food and wine with knowledgeable service, take a leap of faith. Ask if there's chef's menu, or, if not, if the server and sommelier would serve you something they think is smashing.

But what do you do when a restaurant is lacking such service? Some restaurants have a massive collection of wine, but provide no support. This is the kind of establishment where one of the most dreadful guest-server exchanges can be heard:

"What wine would you recommend?"  
 "Well, this one is poplar."

This tells the guest nothing other than they're about to receive the pop star of the wine list. Better to develop a small amount of knowledge about your tastes and preferences.

Though there are countless variables, food-and-wine pairing can essentially be



boiled down to three basic considerations: the weight of the food and the wine, the acidity and the sweetness. In an ideal food-and-wine pairing, neither the food nor the wine should dominate completely. Rather, it should be like a great dance, where, though one may lead, both play important roles. Choose more delicate wines for lighter dishes and heavier ones for richer dishes. Acidity is needed both to match higher acid foods and to cut through rich, fatty dishes. A wine needs to be sweeter than the dish with which it's served. That said, there are two go-to versatile grape varieties I always suggest a slightly off-dry Riesling for a white and a Gamay Noir for the red. They may not be a perfect match with certain dishes, but they will pair very well with a broad range of foods. Lastly, no matter what kind of formula or proof I can provide to explain a wine and food pairing, drink



what you want to drink. If that involves downing a massive Californian cabernet with your seared scallops, so be it. Your tastes are your own.

However, when an opportunity arises to place your dining experience in the hands of dedicated service professionals, do it. Your tastebuds will thank you. Either that, or get the cell number of your favourite sommelier.

Pieter Van Den Weghe is the sommelier at Beckta dining & wine.





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## Fêteing Mom

**M**other's Day in Canada, the day set aside to honour individual mothers for the efforts, sacrifices and love they have so generously displayed all year, is always the second Sunday in May.

In North America, two church services on May 10, 1908, (one in Grafton, West Virginia and another in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) were the first observances of Mother's Day. The services were organized in recognition of Anna Reese Jarvis, a community activist, who 50 years earlier initiated "Mothers' Works Days" in West Virginia. Mrs. Jarvis organized mothers with an initial focus on improving sanitary conditions; however, the scope of their mandate quickly broadened to include caring for the wounded on both sides during the Civil War and facilitating reconciliation efforts. Indeed, as the 19th and 20th centuries evolved so did the concept that motherhood represented an on-going battle for social and economic justice for women, children and the poor. On May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson declared the first national Mother's Day in the U.S., to honour mothers who had lost sons in war.

Although the commercialization of Mother's Day quickly followed, few of us resist the pressures of fêteing mother on her special day. Flowers are not only popular and appropriate, they are also the perfect solution for those who find gift ideas a challenge. Taking Mom out for brunch or dinner is another popular gift, one where more than just mother can enjoy the "collective" benefit of a happy meal together.

But not everyone can afford that special dining experience which mother deserves. And besides, what could please Mom more than the personal effort that goes into preparing a wonderful meal just for her?

I suggest spoiling mother with breakfast. For a fail-proof meal, try my "Fruit-Filled Lace Crêpes." Imagine a large crêpe glazed with strawberry jam, then layered with a combination of fruits, enhanced with touches of cream, syrup and nuts. Topped gently with one of my intriguing "lace crêpes" and dusted with icing sugar, the final product is irresistible.

This is one of those unique recipes where the entire family can get involved



MARGARET  
DICKENSON

in a meaningful way – even the youngest of children. (Or, of course, one person can do it on his/her own.) Tasks should be playfully assigned and procedures reviewed before the action begins. Making the batter, crêpes and

slicing the fruit should be left to more mature hands; however, the actual assembly process can be classified as child's play. Don't worry about the sticky spoons and dishes or the extra icing sugar dust that may clutter the kitchen counter top at the end of this team exercise. Leave the clean-up behind for later. Instead, turn on the music, sit down to an attractively set table and enjoy your breakfast treat with Mom.

If you're more inclined to cook dinner for Mom, keep it simple so that the entire day is not spent in the kitchen. Which mother would not delight in a smoked salmon starter of some kind? Move on to a main course of your choice or perhaps a petit fillet mignon on mushroom wild rice and topped with nutmeg-scented buttered fiddleheads. (Note: Fiddleheads should be making their debut on local markets at that time.) For dessert, modify the Fruit-Filled Lace Crêpes recipe to about half its size. Take a moment to salute Mom and

then savour her enthusiastic response to your creative culinary efforts, all in celebration of her well-deserved day.

Happy Mother's Day and *bon appetit*.

Margaret Dickenson is author of the international award-winning cookbook *Margaret's Table – Easy Cooking & Inspiring Entertaining*. See [www.margaretstable.ca](http://www.margaretstable.ca) for more.

### Fruit-filled lace crêpes

Makes 4 servings

- 2 cups (250 mL) crêpe batter (recipe follows), divided
- 2 cups (500 mL) fresh strawberries (stems removed and sliced) or other berries or diced mango
- 3 cups (750 mL) banana, sliced
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) orange-flavoured liqueur, optional
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) strawberry jam
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) double ginger sour cream sauce\* or crème fraîche or yogurt
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) creamy butterscotch dessert sauce or maple syrup
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) toasted slivered almonds or chopped pecans, optional
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped chocolate, optional
- Garnish (optional)
- As desired whole fresh strawberries and/



Fruit-filled lace crêpes

LARRY DICKENSON



or sprigs of fresh mint

1/2 cup (125 mL) maple syrup (extra, for passing)

1. In a large non-stick skillet/crêpe pan over medium-low heat, prepare four large crêpes (diameter: 7 inch or 17 cm). For each crêpe, pour 1/4 cup (60 mL) of batter into centre of the skillet/crêpe pan. Quickly tilt and rotate skillet to form a thin, even crêpe. Cook until edges begin to turn golden and top surface is set.

2. Using a pancake flipper, carefully peel crêpe from skillet, turn and cook second side briefly (seconds). Transfer each to a separate individual dinner plate.

3. With remaining batter, make four "Lace Crêpes." Using about 1/4 cup (60 mL) of batter for each crêpe, first quickly drizzle a ring about the same diameter as the prepared crêpes and then continue to drizzle in a haphazard manner within ring to form a thin "lace" crêpe. Cook until top surface is set.

4. Using a pancake flipper, carefully peel lace crêpe away from skillet and turn; cook second side briefly. Remove from skillet and stack on a plate, separating each crêpe with a piece of parchment paper; set aside.

5. Place sliced bananas and strawberries in

separate bowls; bathe with liqueur.

6. Using about 1/4 of total amount for each crêpe, spread strawberry jam evenly over each plated crêpe (i.e., regular crêpe), add bananas and dabs of double ginger sour cream sauce. Drizzle with butter-scotch sauce, top with sliced strawberries, toasted nuts and chopped chocolate.

7. Top each fruit-garnished crêpe with a lace crêpe enclosing the fruit mixture between the crêpes.

8. Using a fine meshed small sieve, dust the top surface with icing sugar; garnish with whole fresh strawberries and/or sprigs of fresh mint. Pass maple syrup at table.

\* To make the double ginger sour cream sauce, stir together 1/3 cup (80 mL) of sour cream, 1 1/2 tbsp (23 mL) of icing sugar, 2 tsp (10 mL) of chopped ginger in syrup, 1/3 tsp (2 mL) of ground ginger and if desired, 1/3 tsp (2 mL) of Armagnac liqueur or Cognac. (Makes 1/3 cup or 80 mL of sauce.) Store the sauce refrigerated for up to 10 days. (Note: Ginger in syrup is different from candied ginger. Both are available in health food stores.)

Time Saving tip: Using an "assembly line" technique, these fruit filled lace crêpes are simple and quick to prepare.

### Crêpe Batter

*Makes 10 crêpes (diameter 7 inch)*

1 cup (250 mL) all-purpose flour

1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) granulated sugar

1/8 tsp (Pinch) ground ginger

2 eggs

2 egg yolks

1 1/2 cups (375 mL) milk, divided

1/4 cup (60 mL) unsalted butter or margarine, melted

1. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, sugar and ground ginger.

2. In another medium bowl, using an electric mixer, beat together eggs, yolks and 3/4 cup (about 180 mL) milk.

3. Continuing to beat constantly at low speed, gradually add 1/2 cup (125 mL) of flour mixture, then remaining milk (3/4 cup or 180 mL) and remaining flour mixture (1/2 cup or 125 mL). Beat to form a smooth batter.

4. Beat in melted butter. (Note: If batter is not perfectly smooth, pass it through a course mesh sieve.)

5. Allow batter to rest for at least 30 minutes before using.

6. Whisk batter thoroughly before using.

## Ma cuisine

## The home that Keefer built

Allan Keefer was the architect for many diplomatic residences including those of the Austrian, Spanish, Argentinean, Japanese, Indonesian and Egyptian ambassadors

Jennifer Campbell



DYANNE WILSON

The home of Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Iremark, and her husband, Thomas Thornquist, is an elegant Rockcliffe manor with a dynamite view of the Ottawa River.

**T**he stately brick home with a commanding view of the Ottawa River may not look it from the outside, but inside it's a showcase for Swedish furnishings and art.

"This is not our home, it is Sweden's home," says Ingrid Iremark, ambassador of Sweden, who lives at 700 Manor Ave. with her husband, Thomas Thornquist.

Early in her tenure in Ottawa, two designers from the foreign ministry visited the residence for a couple of days and came up with ideas for new furnishings and art.

"They made some suggestions and we had some say," Ms. Iremark said. "I don't love everything here but I think it functions well. We have light furniture and it's easy to take away when we have large functions, which we do often."

The same week *Diplomat* visited, they

had hosted a piano recital and fundraiser and that meant making room for a grand piano. The home is well-suited for big groups as its usual furnishings are arranged in small sitting areas, leaving lots of open space.

The large receiving room in the middle of the home has a fireplace to the left and two sitting areas. There's a cozy dining room for six or eight facing the front of the home, and a large dining room along the back, with huge picture windows overlooking the river.

For sit-down dinners, the large dining room can accommodate 22 guests and features a hutch that dates back to the 18th century. It's been restored and painted red, which would have been its original colour. While it emphatically declares its antiquity, there are also modern accents in

this bright room, including a mushroom-shaped pale blue curiosity that is knee-high from the floor.

"I think residences should have this kind of thing," Ms. Iremark said of the piece which was recently created by Swedish artist Anders Ruhwald and has what looks like a sink drain in the top. "People sometimes wonder if you should put a candle (in the drain)."

To the left of the main receiving room, there's another, smaller sitting room, with another big window. There's also a pretty sun room with tiled floors, and a suitably dark-walled study. The latter was an addition to the original 1913 home, built for Thomas Coltrin Keefer Jr., grandson of engineer T.C. Keefer, who had originally subdivided Rockcliffe Park Village in 1864. Keefer Jr.'s architect was his brother, Allan,





ALL PHOTOS DYANNE WILSON

Clockwise from top left: Ms. Iremark's formal dinnerware; one of many sitting areas; the expansive dining room which features an 18th century hutch.

who chose a Queen Anne Revival style for the home.

Thomas Keefer wasn't there long. After some financial difficulty, he sold the house in 1919 to James Williams Woods, for \$30,000. Woods then turned around a year later and sold it for \$35,000 to Gilbert Fauquier. It was he who built an adjoining "cottage," now used as a home for the embassy's second secretary, Birgitta Ewing. The Swedish government bought the properties in 1944, becoming the second country to buy a residence in Rockcliffe.

Today, there are many more official residences in the neighbourhood and Keefer designed a handful of them. Indeed, in the 1990s the then Spanish ambassador started a club for those who lived in Keefer homes. Members included the ambassadors of Austria, Egypt, Argentina, In-

donesia and Japan. Stornoway, the official residence of the leader of the opposition, is also a Keefer home.

Today, the home, which has had at least two additions, has a handful of fireplaces and 16 rooms, seven of them bedrooms. Two bedrooms are in the private quarters of Ms. Iremark and Mr. Thornquist while the other five are for guests.

The envoy and her husband are quite happy in the expansive abode they've called home for the past 3½ years. In winter, they create a track around the property for cross-country skiing and use it almost daily.

For staff, they have a full-time Canadian chef, and a housekeeper. They bring in part-time help for large-scale parties and receptions.

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor

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**THIS PAGE 1.** Jean Augustine, former secretary of state for multiculturalism and the status of women, and Evadne Coe, Jamaican high commissioner, took part in a reception March 10 at Ottawa City Hall, hosted by the Black Women's Civic Engagement Network to honour Canadian women who play leading civic roles. Ms. Augustine was given an award. (Photo: Sarah Onyango) • **2.** Chinese ambassador Lan Lijun (right) and his wife, Gu Langlin, attended the China Spring Festival Gala 2009 at the National Arts Centre, Jan. 16. They are shown with Filipino Ambassador Jose Brillantes. (Photo: Frank Scheme) • **3.** The embassy of Kuwait held its national day party at the National Gallery of Canada, Feb. 25. In attendance were Meshal Alhubail, third secretary at the embassy, and his wife, Athari. • **4.** A "shrimp tree" at the Kuwaiti National Day event. • **5.** Defence Minister Peter MacKay showed up at the annual Black & White Opera Soirée at the National Arts Centre with his girlfriend, Jana Juginovic, director of news and programming for CTV NewsNet. (Photos: Dyanne Wilson)





**THIS PAGE 1.** (From left) Borodin Quartet violinists Andrei Abramnikov and Ruben Aharonian played at the Dominion-Chalmers United Church Jan. 18. They are shown with former EU ambassador Dorian Prince and Glenn Hodgins, executive director of the Ottawa Chamber Music Society. (Photo: Bill Blackstone.) • **2.** Austrian Ambassador Werner Brandstetter and his wife, Leonie, make their entrance at the 13th annual Viennese Ball at the National Gallery Feb. 7. • **3.** New Brunswick was a featured province at Winterlude. Premier Shawn Graham dropped by a British Council stand where Cape Farewell Youth Explorers were discussing their Arctic adventures and their climate change project. From left, Nicole Sanscartier, a student from Rothesay High School in New Brunswick, with Margret Brady, of the British Council, and Mr. Graham. (Photo: Gordon Metcalfe) • **4.** The Indonesian Embassy hosted a South Sumatran marriage celebration. Tasha Fikrie (the bride, shown here, doing her traditional "last dance") and Daniel Damphousse agreed to share their wedding with a wider audience. • **5.** Young women dance as part of the wedding celebrations. (Photos: Dimas Firmantoro)



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## New Heads of Mission

**Justin Brown**  
High Commissioner for Australia



Before coming to Canada, Mr. Brown headed up the secretariat to review export policies and programs. Prior to that, he was a member of the secretariat to the prime ministerial task group on emissions trading and was involved in APEC work on climate change.

Mr. Brown, who joined the foreign service in 1987, has served as ambassador for the environment (2004), head of the Asia trade task force (2002 to 2004), assistant secretary, Europe branch (1997 to 1998); and assistant secretary, Americas branch (1994 to 1997). He's been posted as consul-general in Los Angeles (2006), deputy head of mission to the EU (1999-2001) and first secretary in Copenhagen (1988-91).

He has a bachelor of economics degree from the University of New England. He is married to Caroline Linkey and speaks French.

**Shashishekhar M. Gavai**  
High Commissioner for India



Mr. Gavai joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1975, after graduating in history from Fergusson College, Pune, India. Since then, he has served in several important assignments in India and abroad.

In the ministry of external affairs, Mr.

Gavai has been head of division for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, head of the administration division, head of the northern division and India's chief of protocol.

Abroad, Mr. Gavai has served in India's diplomatic missions in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Germany, Scotland (as consul general), Maldives (as high commissioner), and in Houston, U.S. (as consul general).

Mr. Gavai is married to Rina and they have two sons.

**Selwyn Vijayarajan Das**  
High Commissioner for Malaysia



Mr. Das became a member of Malaysia's administrative and diplomatic service in 1979, after he completed a BA and diplomas in public management. He's spent most of his career, which has included getting a law degree from the University of London (1989) and a master's of business administration (1999), in other government departments. For the first six years of his career, he worked as assistant secretary in the petroleum development unit of the prime minister's department. He then served as assistant director in the infrastructure division before moving to finance for seven years. In 2000, he returned to foreign affairs as assistant secretary. In 2003, he was appointed deputy chief of mission in Thailand. He was high commissioner to Kenya in 2005 and came to Canada from that posting.

He is married to Hannah Olive Renuka Devanesan and has two children.

**Francisco Barrio Terrazas**  
Ambassador of Mexico

Born in Satevo, Chihuahua, Mr. Barrio Terrazas is a public accountant and graduate of the Autonomous University of Chihuahua.

When former President Vicente Fox





began his term, Mr. Barrio Terrazas was appointed to head of the federal comptroller's secretariat, a position he held for three years. In 2003, he served as a federal deputy and coordinated the parliamentary group of the National Action Party, of which he was an active member. In 2005, he joined the presidential leadership race in advance of the federal electoral campaign of 2006.

Also in politics, Mr. Barrio Terrazas has served as mayor of Ciudad Juárez and governor of the State of Chihuahua, a post he held from 1992 to 1998. During the 1980s he led the opposition party in Chihuahua.

**Pedro Luis Baptista Moitinho de Almeida**  
Ambassador of Portugal



Mr. Almeida is a career diplomat who joined the ministry of foreign affairs in 1975 as an attaché. Four years later, he was posted to Greece and in 1984, he was sent to Cape Verde. Back at the ministry, he worked as head of the multilateral department and then director of the African desk before going to Barcelona as consul-general in 1993. He then worked as head of several delegations and missions including the EU's monitoring mission for the Balkans, and the East Timor special administrative mission. He was consul-general in Hong Kong in 2003 and served as a special representative of the Portuguese presidency of the EU for six

months in 2007.

Mr. Almeida has an economics degree. He is married and has two daughters.

**Enrique Delgado**  
Ambassador of Uruguay



Mr. Delgado joined the ministry of foreign affairs in 1975 as third secretary and worked in the ministry in various capacities between postings. In 1979, he was appointed Uruguay's consul to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and in 1988 as minister-counselor to the mission in Venezuela.

The following year, he took the same position in Argentina. In 1997, he was appointed ambassador to Nicaragua (based

in El Salvador) and a year later, he became chief of the Uruguay delegation to the Free Trade of the Americas market access group. In 2004, he became ambassador to Mexico.

Mr. Delgado has a master's degree in international law from the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. He is married to Lidia De Leon de Delgado and has two children.

**Khaled Mahfoodh Bahah**  
Ambassador of Yemen



Before becoming ambassador to Canada, Mr. Bahah spent two years as minister of oil and minerals where he managed some

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15,000 employees. In this position, he was also chairman of the board of directors for the Yemen Liquefied Natural Gas Project and the Safer Exploration and Production Petroleum Company; as well as the Yemen General Corporation for Oil and Gas. In addition, he was a board member for the General Investment Authority; the Higher Council of Economic and Oil Affairs and the Export Committee.

From 2005 to 2006, he was general manager of the Arabia-Yemen Cement Company.

After completing a master's of commerce at Pune University, India, in 1992, he joined the Canadian company, Nexen Petroleum, in Yemen. There, he held senior positions in sections including joint ventures, human resources and general accounting.

Mr. Bahah is married and has one son.

#### Yerlan Abildaev

##### Ambassador of Kazakhstan

Mr. Abildaev has a PhD in mathematics and is a graduate of the Leningrad State University (Russia) and the World Bank Institute for Economic Development in Washington (U.S.) He has a PhD (mathematics).

He joined the ministry of foreign affairs in 1994 and prior to that, he worked as a lecturer and researcher at the Kazakh Pedagogical Institute and Kazakh State University.

From 1996 to 2002, he served at his country's embassy in Belgium where he reached the position of chargé d'affaires. For the following year, he served as chairman of the investment committee of the



ministry of industry and trade. From 2003-2004, he was director of the department of Europe and America, at foreign affairs.

For the four year before he came to Canada, he was ambassador to Tajikistan.

Mr. Abildaev is married and has three children.

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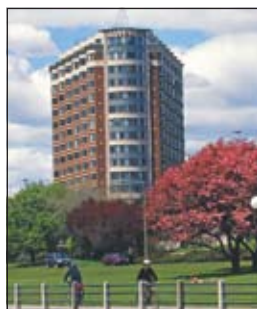
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# NORWAY'S BATTLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE



BY TOR BERTIN NAESS  
*Ambassador of Norway*

**N**orway is preparing for a visit April 28 to 30, from Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada. After meeting with the Royal Family in Oslo, Ms. Jean will travel to the Arctic city of Tromsø (at 69°N). Our two countries share many common interests, including natural resources and the provision of energy and concerns about the global challenges: energy security and climate change.

## Norway as a reliable energy producer

As a large oil and gas producer and exporter, Norwegian energy and foreign policy are closely linked. We are the world's second-largest gas exporter (Russia is the largest gas producer and exporter), fifth-largest oil exporter and sixth-largest producer of hydrocarbons.

In times of major global challenges and changes, it is essential for Norway to remain a stable and reliable provider of energy for the world market, and, at the same time, be at the forefront internationally in the fight against climate change.

The Norwegian economy (approximately \$461 billion GDP) is highly dependent on petroleum revenues (approximately \$60 billion) which account for roughly half of Norwegian export earnings.

Stable Norwegian deliveries of oil and gas to the world market remain our most important contribution, as a major



GOV. GEN. MICHAËLLE JEAN, SHOWN HERE WITH NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TOR BERTIN NAESS, WILL TRAVEL TO NORWAY APRIL 28-30.

global energy nation, to energy security.

Norway's goal is to remain a long-term, reliable and stable supplier. This is a responsibility we take seriously, not least at a time when energy security is at the top of the political agenda worldwide.

As a small country rich in resources, Norway has nothing to gain by politicizing petroleum power. We will remain a reliable supplier of oil and gas to competitive markets and want to continue to play a constructive and active role in the dialogue between energy consumers and producers.

The use of active diplomacy to persuade other oil exporters to implement similar climate policy initiatives as Norway is a top priority. But many petroleum-rich countries, particularly those in politically unstable areas, have a quite different record when it comes to democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Petroleum resources can be a heavy burden for such countries and we must ask how we

can work together to ensure long-term positive effects of this valuable resource.

## Need for better global governance

Today's global governance system is inadequately equipped to meet current and future global problems. It suffers from the gap between rich and poor countries and the antagonisms this causes. We must seek multilateral approaches to global challenges. Norway is dependent on a robust international order.

Transparency, cooperation and dialogue should be key elements, not only in energy policy and the energy market, but also in all aspects of global governance.

The current economic downturn should inspire political "upturn." It presents an opportunity to review and improve global governance. Economic and political developments will impact energy security, just as energy developments will impact global economics and politics.



The emergence of strong new players on the global scene, including Brazil, China, India, South Africa and a more assertive Russia, has huge geopolitical implications.

The financial crisis is global. But the economic downturn should not distract us from the urgency of dealing with the twin challenge of energy security and climate change.

We need to consider how energy security issues can best be handled within existing institutions, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Energy Association (IEA), International Energy Forum (IEF), the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The interfaces between Norwegian energy policy and Norwegian foreign policy and geopolitics are growing rapidly. We have to balance our energy interests with other political considerations, such as climate issues and our relations with Russia.

Climate change, Russia and the High North/Arctic are all foreign policy areas with long-term implications. They all involve challenges and opportunities for Norway as a global, climate-conscious energy nation.

### The High North

The High North is a strategically important area for Norway, as it is for Canada and Russia. Energy and climate change are important reasons why this is so.

The challenges in the relations between Russia and the West have not, so far, had any spillover effect on the bilateral relations between Norway and Russia. Norway has been at peace with Russia for 1,000 years, and we have managed our neighbourly relations in a responsible way during very different times.

Relations between Russia and West are likely to continue to be challenging in the future. Isolating Russia is no solution. It is important to maintain dialogue, which is the only real opportunity we have to influence Russia. A breakdown in our channels of communication could also strengthen the inward-looking forces in Russia that want the country to turn its back on the West.

Energy and climate change are also the drivers of increasing international attention to the High North. The High North offers front-row seats to the climate change now taking place.



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The Arctic climate is warming rapidly. The impacts will affect the rest of the world through further global warming and rising sea levels. Long-term preservation of the Arctic, as we know it today, will only be possible if we follow a clear strategy for reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases to a sustainable level.

Arctic nations need to send a strong message to the United Nations climate change conference (COP15) in Copenhagen, December 7 to 18, about what is happening to the ice in the North and in other parts of the world. A new climate agreement that ensures significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is vital for preserving the Arctic.

We, for a long time, will have to deal with a changed and gradually more accessible Arctic. For example, areas previously covered by thick ice are already beginning to open up for shipping and resource exploration.

For Norway, it is important to underline that an extensive international legal framework within the UN already applies to the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic Ocean is not a lawless territory. Within this legal framework, the Arctic states are examining how increased activity in these areas should be managed.

### Climate change and the energy dilemma

Climate change is the most severe long-term challenge facing humanity. The international financial crisis will pass, but the damage to the environment will remain for generations. And climate change is inextricably linked to energy.

The increase of global energy use has improved the quality of life for people all around the world, but it has also led to a

massive increase of global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. We cannot allow that development to continue.

In the decades to come, we will have to resolve our energy dilemma. We will have to decrease global emissions of greenhouse gases by more than 50 per cent, and increase the global supply of energy by more than 50 per cent. How will we fulfil this huge common task?

As a major exporter of fossil fuels, the threat of climate change and the increasing demand for energy represents a dilemma for Norway. But this dilemma is also a global dilemma – not just for producers but also for consumers.

As we all know, we need to decarbonize world energy production. Carbon capture and storage is a key technology in this regard. Norway and Canada have more than 10 years' experience with off-shore CO<sub>2</sub> storage, we from our gas field, Sleipner, in the North Sea. In May, the Norwegian government will host a high-level conference on carbon capture and storage.

The year 2009 is a critical year. We need to reach a new, more comprehensive and effective climate framework agreement in Copenhagen.

This will not be easy. It will require flexibility political leadership from all parties. Nevertheless, we must be ambitious. The financial crisis must not be allowed to weaken climate policies or the outcome in Copenhagen. It is crucial that political pressure is maintained.

Securing energy supply and speeding up the transition to a low-carbon energy system call for radical action by governments and active participation in coordinated international efforts. It is only through extensive international cooperation that we will be able to address the huge challenges of climate change.

The Arctic is a particularly vulnerable environment, and one with petroleum potential. Here our energy and political relations with Canada, Russia (and other countries with which we share Arctic interests) are essential.

Given the changing face of energy and geopolitics, it is important for Norway to remain a reliable, long-term and climate-conscious exporter of oil and gas. We will continue to pursue further dialogue between energy producers and energy consumers, building interdependence and relations based on trust.

*Tor Berntin Naess is Norway's ambassador to Canada.*

# NORWAY: POWERED BY NATURE

BY TOR BERNTIN NAESS  
*Ambassador of Norway*

**P**opulous Norwegian cities, such as the capital of Oslo and the Hanseatic city of Bergen, enjoy a modern, cosmopolitan and culturally-rich way of life.

Norway has, however, a very long and rugged coast where you can find old traditions and a unique coastal culture, still kept very much alive. People live along almost the entire length of the Norwegian coast, which is punctuated by long beaches, bustling coastal towns, world-famous fjords, thriving fishing villages and restored fishermen's shacks. The islands along the coast are inhabited and full of natural splendour, bird colonies and local culture.

The Norwegian summer is at its best along the south coast. Here you can lie out on a rock with a good book and soak up the sun. The west coast is the place to enjoy your favourite water-based activities. Deep-sea rafting gets the adrenalin pumping and sea fishing provides relaxation and excitement at the same time. Up in the north, you can visit small fishing villages that are still going strong. Eagle and whale safaris bring you closer to the local wildlife. In the winter, adrenalin junkies can even swim with killer whales. Many of the shacks where the fishermen lived during the fishing season in times gone by have been restored and converted into unusual accommodation called Fishermen's Cabins. Along the coast, you will also find lighthouses which have gradually been decommissioned and instead now offer accommodation at the mouth of the fjords.

## World Famous Fjords

Norway has the highest concentration



GEIRANGERFJORD: A SPECTACULAR SITE ON UNESCO'S  
WORLD HERITAGE LIST.

INNOVATION NORWAY



of fjords in the world, and nowhere on earth are there more than in western Norway. For this reason, the region is commonly referred to as Fjord Norway. However, fjords can also be found in central, northern and eastern Norway. [www.visitnorway.com/us/lists/Destinations-article-list/Central-Norway/](http://www.visitnorway.com/us/lists/Destinations-article-list/Central-Norway/)

Fjords are nature's own work of art, formed when the glaciers retreated and sea water flooded the U-shaped valleys. Thanks to the warming Gulf Stream, the Norwegian fjords enjoy a mild climate and remain virtually ice-free. Seals, porpoises and an abundance of fish swim in the fjords, while eagles and other birds soar the skies above. Along most fjord shores there is lush flora and fertile soil. In many places, the land has been farmed for thousands of years. Orchards with flowering fruit trees along the Hardangerfjord in May is an image of paradise.

These saltwater fjords are often very deep and can drop as much as 1,308 metres below sea level. Because they are so deep, they permit navigation by large ships, allowing you to experience their beauty at close range.

UNESCO has included the fjords of Norway, exemplified by the Geirangerfjord and Nærøfjord, on its prestigious World Heritage List. [www.visitnorway.com/us/Articles/Norway/West/The-Geirangerfjord-and-Trollstigen/](http://www.visitnorway.com/us/Articles/Norway/West/The-Geirangerfjord-and-Trollstigen/)

The Nærøfjord is, at one point, only 250 metres across, while mountains tower up to 1,800 metres above its tranquil waters. The Geirangerfjord is famous for its beauty and magnificent waterfalls, the best known being the Seven Sisters. Gudvangen and Geiranger, the two innermost villages of these two fjords, are among the most popular cruise ship ports in Scandinavia.

It is not only UNESCO that views the Norwegian fjords as exceptional. *National Geographic* magazine has named the fjords "the best unspoiled travel destinations in the world." And the respected American newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune* has included Norway's fjords on its list of "Seven Wonders of Nature."

### Midnight Sun and Northern Lights

In northern Norway, the sun never sets during the summer months, blurring the concepts of day and night. In summer, night time is just a dimmer version of daytime. The light of the Midnight



AURORA BOREALIS: A JAW-DROPPING AND MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Sun gives the landscape a magical and romantic dimension. Visitors to northern Norway during the summer months will experience the Midnight Sun fully in clear weather, but even if it is cloudy, the light nights are still a unique experience. Evenings are light during the summer in the rest of the country, too, with sunset as late as 10:30 p.m. and sunrise at 3 a.m.



NORWEGIAN FISHING VILLAGE

"No pencil can draw it, no colours can paint it, and no words can describe it in all its magnificence," Julius von Payer, the Austrian explorer, painter and keen observer of the Northern Lights, once wrote.

Seeing the Northern Lights – Aurora Borealis – is a jaw-dropping and mystical experience. Sometimes the Northern Lights come all together, dancing across the sky, orange, purple, green and sunset red. Other times, they are simply curtains of computer-screen green or twisters of wispy light. The Northern Lights are never the same twice. They are at their most frequent in late autumn and early spring, with October, February and March being the best months for observation. Theoretically, you can see them all over Norway. However, the best places are above the Arctic Circle in northern Norway.

For more information, please see [www.visitnorway.com/us](http://www.visitnorway.com/us), and join the Facebook-group Visitnorway USA ([www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)).

## DISCOVER THE NETHERLANDS WITH AMBASSADOR WIM GEERTS AND HIS FAMILY

BY ANNA RIJK

**H**olland is a versatile country. It's quite small, but there is a lot going on and so much to see. Visit its many museums, cycle through the bulb fields, sail the Dutch waterways, sleep in its castle or hotels, use it as your gateway to Europe. Everyone in Holland speaks English and is very friendly.

Wim Geerts, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Canada, his wife Thea and their daughters Suzanne and Lisa show you their favourite destinations.

### Wim Geerts:

#### 'Polderen is typically Dutch'

"More than half of Holland is below sea level and more than 20 per cent of the land has been reclaimed from the sea and turned into so-called polders, by draining the lakes.



POLDER - WINDMILLS

My country is famous for these polders. Without dikes and pumps, large parts of the Netherlands would disap-



LEFT TO RIGHT: THEA, LISA, SUZANNE AND WIM GEERTS

pear under water again. For me, the link between the polders and politics is appealing, mainly because many of our values, such as open-mindedness, innovation and cooperation, originated from the ongoing Dutch struggle with water. They were a necessity for survival.

### Decision-making

Nowadays the so-called 'polder model' is a term used to describe the internationally acclaimed Dutch version of consensus policy in economics. However, the term was quickly adopted for a much wider meaning, for similar cases of consensus decision-making, which are typi-

cally Dutch.

When you visit the Netherlands you have to visit those areas. Walk, bike or drive, and experience yourself why the Dutch needed to 'polder' and why they have to work together to discuss and invent new means of protection.

These modern windmills are used to generate electricity in an environmentally friendly manner. The thousands of Dutch windmills declined to the approximately 900 mills remaining today.

If you want to see windmills at their very best, you have to head to Kinderdijk where, in the mid-1700s, 19 mills in four distinct styles, were built to power a



complex system of pumps designed to keep water levels in balance. Nowadays Kinderdijk is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visitors walk paths or take advantage of tour boats to navigate canals and take in the world's most comprehensive collection of historical windmills.

#### Exciting cities

Apart from the polders, the Netherlands has great cities. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Maastricht each offer a unique view of the country. Amsterdam, the country's capital, holds the economic heartbeat and is known for its concentric canal ring. Rotterdam is home to one of the largest and best ports in the world. The Hague houses the Dutch Royal Family of Orange-Nassau and the government of Holland. Maastricht is one of the oldest cities of Holland, located in the hills of Limburg, and is the site of various Roman ruins and caves. There is something to do and to see for everybody in Holland.

**Suzanne Geerts:**

#### 'Jump on a bike'

We arrived last summer in Ottawa, and we all love this city. But one thing we miss is our daily biking trips. The Netherlands is really a country of cyclists. Almost every person in the Netherlands has at least one bicycle, which means that there are actually more bicycles than people. A bicycle is better than a car for getting around town. It's quicker and better for the environment too.

Holland is the perfect place to spend a cycling vacation. And because my country is so flat and has a mild climate, it's very doable for everybody. I know Holland offers packages to cyclists of all levels, offering everything from day trips and weekend trips to fully fledged cycling vacations for both groups and individuals.

#### Easy to find your way

The Dutch have built a network of separate bike paths exclusively for cyclists in both rural and urban areas. You ride through the most wonderful landscapes,

and you never see a car close by. All bike paths are mapped out and the maps are available in Holland in local book stores, local tourist offices (VVV's), or at all of the ANWB (the Dutch automobile association) branches. So, it's easy to find your way around on a bike. And of course, you can use your GPS and download maps of the Dutch bike paths.

Bikes can be rented by the hour, day, week, or even longer at most train stations or bicycle shops for about eight Euros a day or 35 Euros a week.

By the way, if you have a chance, it would be neat if you could join my dad on a bike ride in Ottawa, on May 31. This is the first day of Canada's Environment Week. Closer to this date there will be more information available at [www.netherlandsembassy.ca](http://www.netherlandsembassy.ca).

#### Thea Geerts :

#### 'World-class cultural offerings'

Many of the world's famous painters are Dutch, such as Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Frans Hals and Johannes Vermeer. If you would like to understand the Dutch,



KINDERDIJK IS ANOTHER UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE



take a closer look at their paintings in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, the nearby Vincent van Gogh museum, or the Mauritshuis in The Hague.

### Famous portraits

Though the Dutch elite was never really extravagant and did not have a real court as existed in Germany, France and Spain, they preferred to stash small items of great value in their mansions rather than in baroque palaces. You can still see this in the countless portrait paintings they commissioned.

Did you know the Vancouver Art Gallery will host an exhibition of paintings from the Rijksmuseum this summer? If you won't have an opportunity to travel to the Netherlands, you can experience Dutch art at an exhibition entitled 'Vermeer, Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art, Masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum' held from May 10 to September 13, 2009. [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

### Holland Art Cities

In 2009 and 2010, the four largest cities in Holland will be taking part in a large-scale art and cultural event called 'Holland Art Cities.' As part of this event, the top 10 museums in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht will be joining forces to put together an unprecedented art spectacle. The program, which consists of at least 25 exhibitions over the course of the two years, is an absolute must for all art lovers. [www.hollandartcities.com](http://www.hollandartcities.com)

### Other museums

Apart from the glory days of the 17th century, there is much in the Netherlands to attract the present-day visitor.

If you and your family want to get a quick idea of what the Netherlands looks like, you should visit the miniature city of Madurodam in The Hague. There you will find models of famous buildings and sights from all over the country. It is a very popular place for both children and adults.

### Lisa Geerts:

#### 'Visit your inner world'

I would like to show you something unique. This is a world first, and a spectacular experience around the human body, right in the Netherlands. Corpus is a 'journey through the human body' during which you can see, feel and hear how



HISTORIC AMSTERDAM STREETSCAPE



MADURODAM MUSEUM

the human body works and what roles healthy food, healthy living and plenty of exercise plays. I just love it.

#### Start with the knees

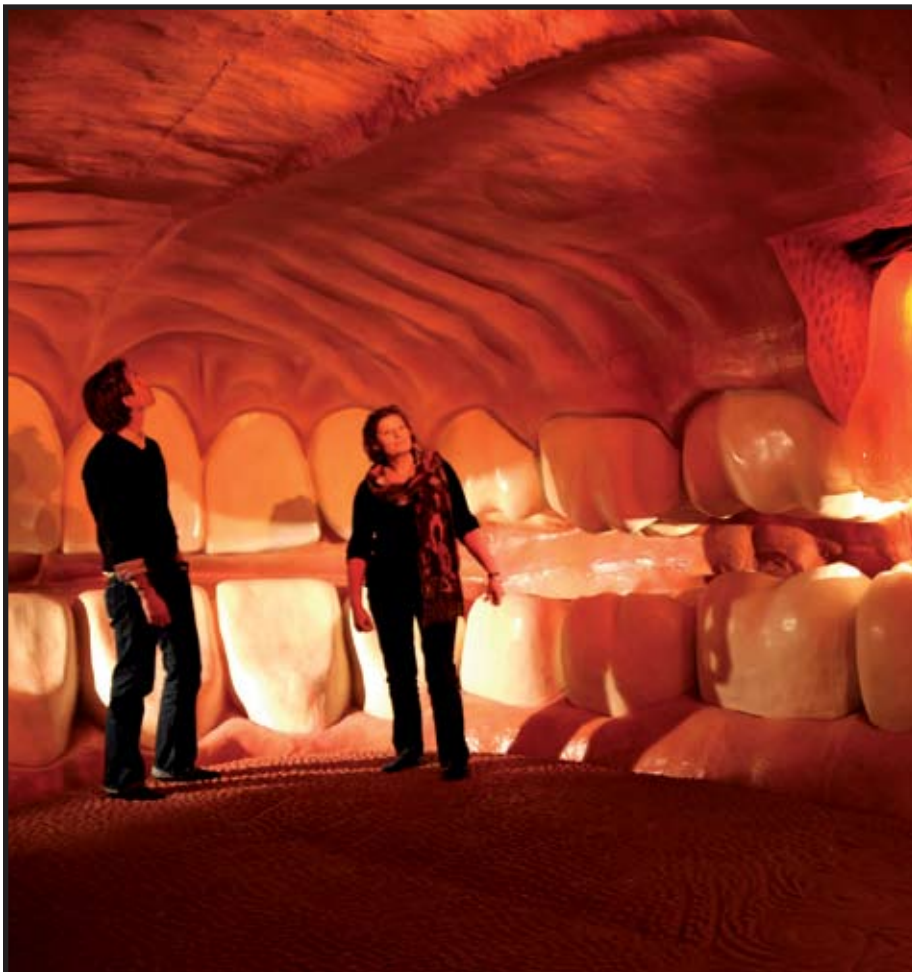
It's not only interesting for people inter-

ested in biology or kids who would like to become medical doctors. Just enter through the knees of the corpus and exit in the brain. You will start a thrilling journey in the 5D heart theatre as a red blood





BIKING IN THE NETHERLANDS



CORPUS INTERIOR

cell or discover the spectacular operation of the human brain in the brain show. You get answers to questions such as 'How does my hair grow,' or 'What happens when you sneeze?' and 'Where on your tongue do you taste sugar?'

#### Close encounters

It's really fascinating: You walk through a stomach, you will have a close encounter with lungs and get better acquainted with your heart. Corpus uses the latest technology in the field of imagery, sound and 3D effects to present and explain all medical aspects of the human body. After touring around you can have fun while testing your health and learning more about your own body in the medical information centres.

Corpus is built in Oegstgeest (near Leiden), and has been open since March 2008. For more information, visit [www.corpusexperience.nl](http://www.corpusexperience.nl).

When you see the building with your own eyes, you just have to stop and visit. Enjoy!

For more ideas and travel information on the Netherlands: [www.us.holland.com](http://www.us.holland.com)

*This article was written by Anna Rijk, communications and public diplomacy at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in partnership with Netherlands Bureau for Tourism, New York.*

# A TOUCH OF DUTCH

BY ANNA RIJK

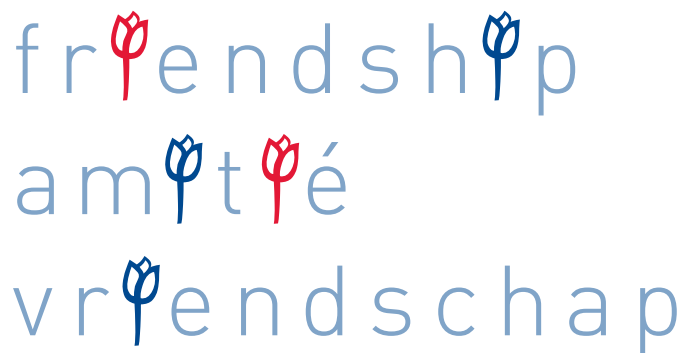
**D**esigned especially for the citizens of Ottawa and also to have a chance to work closely together with a number of wonderful organizations in the nation's capital, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands offers a friendship program 'A Touch of Dutch' every spring.

Kicked-off at the end of April with a reception to celebrate Queen Beatrix's birthday, other activities, presentations and events are offered throughout the spring. The program runs when the tulips are blooming. At this time of the year there is an almost natural attention for the Netherlands in Ottawa.

Most people know about the close relationship between Canada and the Netherlands and the Canadian Tulip Festival. The gift of tulips was in appreciation of hospitality that members of Holland's royal family received in Ottawa during the Second World War and with gratitude for the pivotal role Canadian troops played in the liberation of the Netherlands. Princess Margriet was born at the Ottawa Civic Hospital; her hospital room was declared "Dutch soil" and the flag of the Netherlands flew on Parliament's Peace Tower. The tulips have become an important symbol of international friendship.

Canada and The Netherlands have developed their bonds of friendship ever since. Today both countries have excellent relationships in many fields reflected by the various activities of 'A Touch of Dutch.' Some parts of the program will focus on historical and military bonds, others on the future.

All activities of 'A Touch of Dutch 2009' will be published at [www.netherlandsembassy.ca](http://www.netherlandsembassy.ca) once the kick-off date is closer. Feel free to simply pick whatever interests you and celebrate with us these festive friendship bonds. For more information, contact Anna Rijk at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at (613) 237-5031 ext. 231.



## Highlights of 'A Touch of Dutch 2009'

### May 3 – Happy Birthday, Queen Beatrix

Celebrate the Dutch Queen's Day with Ambassador Wim Geerts and his family. A perfect way to warm up for the Canadian Tulip Festival with your children. Greenboro Library, 2:00 p.m.

### May 4 – Wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial.

Please join Ambassador Wim Geerts and remember the fallen soldiers. May 4 is the National Remembrance Day in the Netherlands, equivalent to November 11 in Canada.

### May 2-17 – Three Dutch weekends at the Canadian War Museum.

Meet veterans who served in Europe during WWII. Listen – with your children – to the reading of 'A Bloom of Friendship' and much more. Served with

coffee, tea and Dutch friendship cookies.

### May 4-13 – Water Presentations hosted by the Ottawa Public Library

Water management is vital for a country hemmed in by the North Sea. The Dutch are world famous because of their struggle against the water. May 4, North Gloucester Branch – 7-8 p.m.

May 6, Alta Vista Library – 7-8 p.m.

May 11, Main Branch (Metcalf Str) – 7-8 p.m.

May 13, Nepean Centre Point Library – 7-8 p.m.

### May 31 – Go Green Go Dutch Go Bike

Come and bike with Ambassador Wim Geerts and celebrate Dutch heritage as well as the spirit of the Canadian Environment Week. Together with Councillor Clive Doucet, the Netherlands Embassy will focus on the traditions of Dutch cycling and on the positive results towards the environment in general.





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# An often-overlooked Maine attraction

By Jessie Reynolds and Matt Renshaw



MATT RENSHAW

Portland Head Light: "The most photographed lighthouse in North America."

**D**eparting in our bright-white, newly-minted 2009 Mustang convertible rental from Toronto's Pearson International Airport at 11:00 p.m. might have seemed reasonable when we were in the planning our economy-class trip to Maine. When we finally pulled into Portland, Maine's largest city, seven cups of coffee and roughly 10 hours later, we realized that perhaps sleeping through the night might have been a good idea before starting out on our two-week open-air driving vacation.

The route was pretty simple and, for whatever parts of it weren't, our borrowed (and quickly mastered) GPS saved the day. It turns out that all we needed for a memorable driving holiday is a convertible, coffee-cup holders, a GPS and one statewide pull-out map (which was in shreds by the

end of Week One). Driving from Toronto to Portland was purely an exercise in economy – we could have rented the car in Portland. We had convinced ourselves, though, that the journey was as important as the destination. Luckily, we were right.

From Toronto, we headed through New York State and Massachusetts before cutting across a small corner of New Hampshire and pulling into Portland early the next morning. By then we had experienced all Highway 90's rest stops had to offer: Welcome centres which provide free coffee and tour books as well as the only clean washrooms we found anywhere in Maine outside of our hotel rooms. In the middle of the night, America's eastern seaboard rest stops are closed, with no concern that drivers are running out of gas, beef jerky and coffee.

Portland conveys a sense of relaxation and efficiency, all at once. Once we entered the city, crossing basket-weave highways and bridges, we quickly sensed this modern city is also an old city, full of history with unique architecture, narrow cobblestone roads and street-side coffee shops. Here, a jazz quartet performed on the sidewalk. There, a fisherman carried his catch off tug-boats. These days, though, the traditional or "hey-day" scenes take place in front of Internet cafés and fair-trade boutique import stores.

Portland offers a variety of chain hotels, small family-run historical hotels and conventional B&Bs. Many such rooms cost between US\$130 and \$200 per night. We opted for – what else? – a deal we found on the Internet. The website, [www.hot-wire.com](http://www.hot-wire.com), offers flights, hotels or packages



at vastly marked-down prices. However, when we made our reservation, all we could specify is how many kilometers we were willing to go from the city centre and the minimum star-rating we wanted. The name of the hotel wasn't provided until we'd signed the dotted line.

We crossed our fingers, hoped for the best, and it worked. We ended up at the lovely Wyndham Hotel, which is less than a 10-minute drive from the centre of Portland. From the outside, it looked like a forgotten relic from the 1960s. Inside, the rooms were luxurious. If one measures luxury by the number of non-functional pillows on the bed, it should be noted that the Wyndham boasted a seven-pillow bed. The food was delicious and the service friendly and prompt. We had free Internet access, together with the kind of toiletries guests want to take home, to sit unused in their guest bathroom.

Portland itself offered a wonderful selection of shopping, restaurants, parks, architecture and, tucked into every cobblestone brick and every artfully-designed wooden sign, the inescapable feeling that we were in the beating heart of New England. It was the combination of fresh salty air, welcoming locals, unbelievable lobster rolls, beautiful scenery and great shopping in a well-established and active port town.

We spent our first afternoon on the Mainely Tours trolley with Bramps ("my granddaughter can't pronounce the 'G'"), the guide who would lean in to the megaphone and offer personal anecdotes throughout the three-hour journey. The trip took us from the docks, through the city, highlighting Victoria Mansion, modern art galleries, the birthplace home of the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (*Evangeline, Song of Hiawatha*), several shopping districts and views of the Fore River. One building to note was Franklin Tower, the tallest building (at 16 stories) in Maine. Portland passed a law that no building could be taller, thereby helping preserve the beauty and history of the city and its waterfront. Crossing the river on the way to Cape Elizabeth, we took in the views of the Portland Head Light, the most photographed lighthouse in North America.

As Bramps' fascinating stories and the salt-water taffy we had smuggled onto the trolley ran out, we headed to Becky's on Hobson's Wharf. This bustling diner rewarded the very patience it demanded from us. The line-up of people outside assured we'd picked the right place, but the turnover was faster than we expected. The all-day breakfast was peerless, the cof-

fee delicious and the blueberry pancakes, a guilty pleasure we suggest not going without. As it's in a place centred on the fishing industry, Becky's pays tribute to the fisherman who helped build the city. To this day, whenever a fisherman is lost at sea, Becky's stays open 24 hours and all the proceeds go to the fisherman's family.

After a day of strolling through the city, we ended up at Dry Dock Restaurant & Tavern, which offered the most extraordinary East Coast meal we enjoyed on our trip: fried clam cakes, a gourmet hamburger and a lobster roll. The latter is a local favourite for good reason.

An East Coast meal wouldn't be complete without some local beer – we suggest

We left Old Orchard Beach a little more tanned and much more relaxed. The beach is half an hour from Portland. Were we local residents, we would be there every weekend in the summer – either for the swimming or for the picturesque Coney Island-type carnival which runs along the beach.

The convertible and the gorgeous highway route made it easier to tear ourselves away from the beach. There really is no better way to travel. Highway 95 runs straight up from Portland to Kittery. Perhaps one of the most famous shopping towns in the U.S., Kittery comes right out of an Abercrombie & Fitch catalogue. It has an endless selection of retail and outlet



Portland offers great shopping, restaurants, parks and architecture, together with the feeling that you are in the "beating heart of New England."

Allagash, Geary's or Shipyard Brewing Co. After enjoying the scenery off the second-floor patio of the restaurant, a busy dock-side bar filled with the city's 20- and 30-something crowd, we went hunting for an ice-cream shop. Beals Ice Cream is wonderful and homemade, a confection which, in the rest of our vacation, we were unable to equal. We suggest chocolate and – in case you stop by – one scoop is plenty.

We returned happily to the bed of pillows at the Wyndham and rested for the adventure we had planned for the next day: Old Orchard Beach. We found the famous beach more expansive than we had imagined – it extends for miles – and much more family-friendly than many of its sister beaches further south. At Old Orchard Beach, the ocean is at its warmest in late July and early August.

stores (J. Crew, Polo Ralph Lauren, Liz Claiborne, Jones New York and Tommy Hilfiger). After resisting temptation in the interest of trunk-space and self-restraint, we stopped by Bob's Clam Hut (where the ice cream gave Beals a good run for its money) and the Starbucks across the street, where we did do some shopping, leaving with two five-pound bags of Gazebo blend. (Starbucks coffee in the U.S. is almost half the price of Starbucks coffee in Canada.) The service was extraordinary – as it was everywhere we went in Kittery.

You can't go to Kittery and not go to Kennebunk and Kennebunkport. Both prosperous towns (which got their names from the Abenaki people's term for "the long cut bank"), they are a great tourism destination for people who enjoy seeing the homes of some of America's most af-



JESSIE REYNOLDS

"We paddled one of the most beautiful places we'd ever seen."

fluent families. The most famous – or infamous – is the estate known as "the Bush Compound" (or, if you insist, Walker's Point), the vacation home of former president George Herbert Walker Bush. The compound is situated on a highly desirable and highly defensible rock outcropping in Kennebunkport.

The GPS came in handy in Kennebunkport as sightseeing there should mostly be done from the car both on and just off the town's coastal road. A series of cul-de-sacs in the area, just off this route, provided a tour of breathtaking homes. After an hour of admiring these abodes, we headed back into town and walked the narrow, winding streets of Kennebunkport. Not to be outdone, Aunt Marie's, the pre-eminent local ice-cream parlour, gave us a taste of the ice cream of the aristocracy. Money might just buy happiness after all.

Leaving for our four-hour journey to Millinocket, a small town in Northern Maine, was one of the more difficult things we had to do. However, once on the road, we discovered that the drive was full of fresh air, varied scenery and lovely country roads. We arrived at the Econo Lodge Inn & Suites, a hotel we selected by default as the town has a population of perhaps 5,000 and no more than a few hotels. We did appreciate the complimentary breakfast and indoor pool but the room itself was brown, basic and bereft of superfluous pillows.

Up early the next morning, we headed to the Trading Post, a meeting-place and sell-all store 30 minutes out of town in Baxter State Park. After asking around to determine the best way to explore the park, we found Katahdin Air, a small outfit which provides kayak and canoe rentals

as well as helicopter tours over the park and Mount Katahdin. We selected a two-person kayak and, at times not so gracefully, made our way across a fair portion of Ambejeus Lake, a lake of clear, cold jet-black water. It was one of the most beautiful places either of us had ever been.

We found our way to a small uninhabited island, pulled the kayak ashore and sat on a giant boulder looking at the mountain from a distance. The mountain is the starting point of the Appalachian Trail and contains the highest peak in Maine. It provided an unparalleled backdrop to the photos we took from the kayak. After a few hours, we returned the kayak to the rental shop. The staff was surprised to see us. It turns out that most of their rentals are for days or weeks, not hours. Exhausted, we headed to town to find a restaurant, settling in at the Appalachian Trail Café.

Later that evening, our search for a vibrant night-life experience led us to East Millinocket (population: 2,000). We were lucky to find the bar, Pam and Ivy's, located between a used-car dealership and a row of dilapidated houses. Donald, one of the locals, picked up where Bramps had left off in Portland and discussed with us, over a few locally-brewed favourites, the failing economy of the town due to the closure of a nearby pulp and paper mill. Once a bustling industrial town, East Millinocket was slowly closing down, resulting in a sudden, sharp drop in population.

During the few hours we were at the pub, we could see that the community remains tightly-knit. Each person who came in knew every other person. Later in the evening, the lights were turned on and the music quieted in memory of a person who had been murdered in the town some years ago. Once a year, on the anniversary date, the crime is solemnly remembered. By chance, we were there for the observance. Feeling enriched, we returned to

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our hotel and reflected on the incredible sense of acceptance we had felt among strangers in such a short time.

Driving from Millinocket, we stopped in Bangor, perhaps most famously known as the place where horror writer Stephen King lives. Bangor, itself, is sadly unremarkable, a once affluent and busy town which now has abandoned stores, empty streets and a slightly melancholy feel. It's no wonder that Mr. King found literary motivation from his childhood experiences growing up in Maine. Any of the residents can point out his address, insinuating that they've heard the question numerous times before. But just to be sure, the house has red paint, a gothic style and a black cast-iron fence adorned with bats and cobwebs. The fence gives tourists something to photograph.

Taking a break from Maine's southern coastal cities, we drove to Acadia National Park. In Canada, of course, we have no shortage of national parks. Acadia National Park, however, offers the natural beauty you expect from a park that boasts 47,000 acres of mountains, oceanfront beaches, rocky shores, forests and lakes. It also boasts numerous ocean-front sandy beaches – not to mention impeccable roads, great visitor-assistance services and Jordon Pond House, a picturesque restaurant.

We made a stop at Thunder Hole, so named because a thunderous noise erupts from inside a small cavern when ocean waves roll in at high tide. We dallied at Echo Lake, which features a fine sand beach and excellent swimming, directly beside the 839-foot Beech Mountain. We dragged ourselves away only with the setting sun. On the one-way road out of the park, we passed gorgeous views the entire way.

For a wind-in-your-hair vacation, Canadians often overlook Maine, selecting either Florida in winter or New York State in summer. Yet Maine offers perhaps a wider variety of attractions than either of these other states: ocean swimming, sophisticated urban centres, national parks, the splendid White Mountains, the small towns that evoke a New England sense of history and community. We concluded to our own satisfaction that that Maine is fully competitive with any other driving destination.

Jessie Reynolds and Matt Renshaw travelled 5,000 kilometers in 14 days and spent roughly \$2,500 (including the cost of ice cream cones) for their Maine vacation.



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