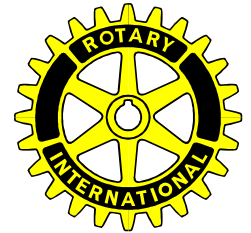




The Beacon News

The Rotary Club of Port Hope



News Bulletin for the Week of February 1, 2010

Haiti Earthquake Survivors

The stress ball was given to Past President Ron Tuttle for his work on Rotary Youth Exchange and his vital work on the Group Study Exchange program.

HEAD TABLE



At the head table and featured as tonight's main guests and speakers were Alice Currelly – Nkunzimana and her husband, Alphonse Nkunzimana, from Haiti to address us on the events associated with the devastation caused by the recent earthquake in Haiti.

Also at the head table with our guests was Rotarian and Past President Ben Currelly, fondly known as Uncle Ben to his niece, Alice.

Following the head table in sequence from right to left from our President's perspective at this point Rotarian Leigh Facey-

Crowther, sitting beside your humble scribe, suggested a quote and asked that it be attributed to him, so I comply: "the changing guests, each in a different mood, sit at the roadside table and arise; and every life among them in likewise is a soul's board set daily with new food."



During the brief hiatus, President Sylvia reminded us there is a board meeting next Monday night. She also reminded us of the importance of the Rotary Foundation's accepting tax-deductible donations to Haiti and of the presence of the matching grants from the Canadian government, and so we moved into our dessert reports.

DESSERT REPORTS

Rotarian Paul Weber reminds us of New Members' Night on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at

162 Walton Street, Paul's home, which he has generously offered to serve as the meeting place. He said there will be at least seven new members attending with their sponsors. Please contact Rotarian Paul at drpweber@hotmail.com to let him know the names of the prospective new members.



Past President Ken O'Neill reminds us that the GSE team from India is arriving on April 13 and going straight to the Pendock's place to eat and meet their host families. Ken looks forward to hearing from those who would offer lodging for our guests from India as well as Rotarians who can drive the visitors to the activities that we are planning for them.

Past President Rolly reminds the scribes that he is preparing a revision to his previous revision which revised an earlier revision concerning scribing



our head table introducer Past President Ben Currelly changed his life with the Hope Air flight by pointing out the existence of the Veterans' Affairs people to assist Second World War vets such as he.



Rotarian Joyce introduced her guest Trish, our very own, who has recently transferred to the Cobourg club.

and also that Ken Burgin has offered to edit the Beacon along with Past President Ron Tuttle while Rotarian Ted Rafuse is away on vacation in February. He was pleased that Rotarian Kelly has joined the note-takers guild which further complicates his revised list and may require further amendments to the revisions.



Past President Bob Wallace, our District Governor waiting-in-the-wings, was accompanied by his wife Kathy who in turn introduced Val MacDonald from Sunrise Rotary who wrote a couple of smashing Newspaper articles about our guests in Northumberland Today.



Rotarian Doug introduced Brie Nixon who is joining Rotary and who will be our resident radio personality.

GUESTS & VISITING ROTARIANS



President Sylvia was pleased to welcome District Governor Doug Byers and his wife Nancy to our gathering as well as Ted Morrison, our District Governor Elect, and his wife Sharon.



Past President Jan introduced Dr. Anna Tucka who is about to become a member.

HAPPY BUCKS

With the efficiency of a fine vacuum cleaner our Sergeant-at-Arms Bruce Coleman swept the room removing loose funds from unsuspecting Rotarians.



Jim Gilmer introduced a good friend, Phil, who recounted how



Rotarian Kelly introduced guest Diane Taylor.



Rotarian George stepped up to take issue with the attendance register.



Rotarian Will Ryan was pleased with the recent dinner and was reminded of his upcoming anniversary for which he was very thankful.



Past President Jan was very pleased to see his great friend and stalwart Rotarian Ted Lacey at the meeting. This sentiment was echoed by your humble scribe.



was happy to be going to the south.



Rotarian Diane was very happy that she had a great birthday, and young R Johnny Mowat, our President Elect, we were told was expecting his twenty-ninth birthday, which we all found, including young Johnny, to require a suspension of disbelief.

Rotarian Paul was happy to advise us of his intent to supplement his income by becoming a much sought after underwear model.



Rotarian Joe was happy to have seen his sons and his grandsons, and in particular to have flown to Halifax to do so.



Past President Ben was very happy that the guest speakers were with us.



Rotarian Leigh was happy that his daughter is expecting a son, but very sad that his father would not be here to enjoy his great-grandson. We share his loss.



Rotarian Bill was very glad that he doesn't pay very much attention to the underwear ads.

Past President Bob Wallace was happy for the exemplary behavior of the District clubs in response to the Haiti disaster in that there were more than two shelter boxes provided per club.

Rotarian Emeritus Jim Adamson was happy to be here in every sense, and Rotarian Sid



District Governor Elect Ted Morrison was happy to be a guest at our club and understood now why Rotarian Bob and Rotarian Ken O'Neill continually talk about the excellent fellowship and downright fun we, in Port Hope, have.



Exchange Student, Elin, had a happy buck because she was fortunate enough to have been a guest to go to Toronto with Rotarian Will Ryan and wife Jennie to a design show which she thoroughly enjoyed.



Guest Phil, unsolicited, put in a happy buck thanking Ben Currelly for putting him in touch with Veterans' Affairs.



President Sylvia was very

happy to see her grandson's picture in the paper and also happy to have our guests, Alice and Alphonse, here this evening.

PROGRAM

Past President Ben Currelly, uncle to Alice Currelly-Nkunuzimana, welcomed his niece and her husband, Alphonse Nkunuzimana, who have recently been evacuated with their family from Haiti to Montreal. He speaks with great pride and with love of his niece and her family and of the ties that his family has with Haiti as the result of her parents, John, who is Ben's brother, and Deb, John's wife, relocating from Port Hope to Haiti a number of years ago.



Our guest speaker said that Canada is the most welcoming place and that she and Alphonse have been made to feel welcome in the true sense of the word. She thanked us all for the opportunity to tell us of her experiences and that the Shelter Boxes being given by Rotary were very appropriate. We are one of the keys to advancing harmony to a nation where some two million people lack the basic necessities of life.

She said it was difficult to comprehend the current situation in Haiti, and she is still reeling from the shock.

She said she is now beginning to approach the point where she has turned the corner with respect to being able to grapple with things that she has experienced recently.

She has lived in Haiti for the past thirty years. She is fortunate that two of her four children are in Canada, one just starting at TCS and one at the University of Toronto. The younger children are with her and Alphonse.

On the day of the earthquake, January 12, 2010, she said there was a loud rumbling noise, then books, dishes, paintings on the wall began shaking and crashing.

She said she ran outside and listened to the screams of two million people. The sounds of despair, the screaming and the praying to God are something that she will never forget. She said Haiti is a very spiritual place and a very much abused country. She wonders if the spirituality and the presence of too much faith are a cause or effect with respect to the abuse. Whatever the correlation, she states that they are a people with too little by way of material means. They rely often solely and completely on God and she can hear their songs and prayers.

Jails burst open and criminals were freed. Notwithstanding that, the faith of the Haitian

people has survived and will continue to survive. Perhaps, as she muses, the more faith you have, the more you suffer. Nevertheless, nothing can be built without material things. What to do? Where do we go? In a country of such spirituality there is always hope.

She went into the city and saw that three hundred United Nations employees were lost, high ranking officials were dead and the building had become a dusty pile of rubble. How could anybody survive? She experienced firsthand the horrific images that the rest of us saw only fleetingly on the television. She said in the face of this horror there were people who tried to help, who demonstrated their resilience and maintained their dignity.

Alice said the international community is helping. Help is coming gradually. In a country where all the services were meager at best, they have now disappeared.

She points to seventeen hundred staff from the international community providing tents/water supplies/medical facilities and food rations. Aid has poured forth that is commensurate with the scale of the disaster and there has been strong and effective coordination from the US, Canada and the UN, who are the primary agents of delivery.

She was gratified that the Canadian government has pledged as much in terms of relief and aid as the US

government, a remarkable outpouring of generosity.

Alice spoke of the family's arrival in Montreal and the efficiency of the Red Cross and their kind attention to detail and being very particular about what is needed and not being random, but specific in their providing. She points to this as being a great organizational tool; that is, the provision of aid and relief through well-defined clusters, for example, the Health Cluster.

She said when the dust finally settles, the Haitian President must now think about the future. It is something that she believes can be seen as an opportunity and a responsibility to make things in Haiti better and to free Haitians from the yoke of dependency.

Alice said great strides have been made and will continue to be made in respect of maternal health and fighting disease.

She says the larger picture must be borne in mind throughout where the provision of jobs and the dignity of the individual will lead the people out of the shadow of poverty.

She said that personally she and her family are very lucky because of the support of a close knit family group.

Alice said that this is not the case for the average Haitian family whose suffering is incomprehensible. Nevertheless her life and her family's life in Haiti and the future must be viewed from the perspective of short term and

long term needs. Initially she felt paralyzed by fear. That cannot be. She and Alphonse are very motivated. Alphonse, of whom she is understandably proud, works toward establishing the Rule of Law for the United Nations. Now he is going to be busier than ever.



Alice works as a translator and with the increased presence of the international community her services will be more in demand than ever.

They will be busy for months and possibly for years trying to establish in detail what is to be done. The palace is gone, the cathedral has crumbled and a country where there was seventy-five percent unemployment before the quake, inconceivable to us, now has an even worse situation. Two hundred thousand people are dead, there are thousands and thousands of amputees and orphans, but there is a collective national awakening and the will and opportunity to build in a spirit of democracy and tolerance. Their job now will be to return to help people, to be there as humans who are lucky enough to have survived the catastrophe. When this disaster becomes old news, they will continue to fight against complacency.

Asked about when they would return, Alice said that she and her husband, Alphonse, and the children will head back as soon as possible, but it is not so easy because the transportation pathways have been disrupted, but it is their intent to start perhaps this Sunday and perhaps even with the potential of using the great service of Air Ben.

In answer to several questions, Alice spoke about the fact that she and Alphonse were lucky to have armed guards in their house and volunteers from the Save the Children Fund staying there during their absence to protect their property.

She also advised that the Red Cross and hundreds of other organizations are involved in Haitian relief, but that one should continually be vigilant for fraudsters who seem to crawl from under various rocks to take advantage of such situations for their personal gain.

In response to a question about heading down to offer personal assistance, Alice was quick to point out that now is not the most propitious time, but in about six to eight months there will probably be a huge demand for that kind of help. Past President Jim Gilmer asked

about their children and was assured at least to learn as we all were that the children have adapted relatively well and their close friends have survived. Alice said their little ones are clingy but otherwise okay.

We were all very moved to hear the accounting by our guest supported by her very proud and caring husband, Alphonse.



I commend to you as Rotarians the fine articles prepared by Val MacDonald in the Wednesday, February 3, 2010 edition of Northumberland Today.

These articles very accurately describe the situation and will give us greater insight into the work and mission of these two fine people. It was especially heartening to read about Alphonse and his remarkable work in Rwanda where he was with a team researching the mass killings about which General Romeo Dallaire wrote in his book, Shake Hands with the Devil.

Rotarian Joe James gave a brief, heartfelt thank you for the moving description of Haiti which he described as, for us, either a tourist experience or a movie experience which only brushes the surface of the complexity and terrible beauty of the Haitian experience.

50-50 WINNER

Rotarian Diane Pendock won the 50/50 draw and with true Rotarian spirit donated her winnings to the Haitian Fund.

DOOR DUTY ON FEBRUARY 8

John Mowat, Joyce Best

SCRIBE ON FEBRUARY 8

Bud Lynch

WEB SITE

Please take a moment to visit the Port Hope Rotary web site. www.porthoperotary.com We will be adding new information all the time.

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE


Date	Speaker	Location	Door Duty	Scribe
February 8	Camp Enterprise – Leigh Facey-Crowther	K of C	John M., Joyce	Bud
February 15	Family Day Holiday – No Meeting			
February 22	Kyle Sutton, Returned YE Student Spouse’s Night	K of C	Dianne, Jim G.	Rolly
March 1	Big Brothers/Big Sisters Bowling	K of C	Roger, Ben	Kelly
March 8	AIDS Fund Raiser – Belleville Rotary Club	K of C	Jan, Erin	Dianne
March 15	Club Assembly	K of C	Merv, George	Bud
March 22	Wrap Around Northumberland	K of C	Ken B., Bud	Jim Hunt
March 29	TBA	K of C	TBA	Rolly

COMING EVENTS

Monday, April 19

Foundation Dinner at the new Ganaraska Forest Centre Building

**ROTARY CLUB OF
PORT HOPE**



**THE FUTURE OF ROTARY
IS IN YOUR HANDS**

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