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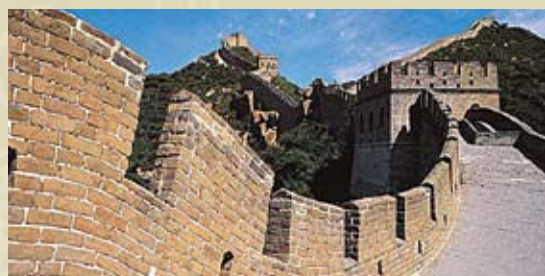
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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
*Diplomat & International Canada* is published four times a year. Subscription rates: individual, one year \$35.70. For Canadian orders add 5 per cent GST. U.S. orders please add \$15 for postage. All other orders please add \$25.  
**SUBMISSIONS**  
*Diplomat & International Canada* welcomes submissions. Contact Jennifer Campbell, editor, at editor@diplomatonline.com or (613) 231-8476.  
**DIPLOMAT & INTERNATIONAL CANADA**  
P.O. Box 1173, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1P 5R2  
Phone: (613) 422-5262  
E-mail: info@diplomatonline.com  
**www.diplomatonline.com**  
Published by  
Sparrow House  
Enterprises Inc.





## For the love of the forest

**T**he United Nations has declared 2011 International Year of Forests. The UN makes its case for the importance of forests with only a few numbers: The livelihoods of more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests. Forests cover 31 percent of the Earth's total land area. Forests are home to 80 percent of our terrestrial biodiversity, not to mention 300 million people worldwide. Trade in forest products exceeded \$327 billion (before the Great Recession.)

How are we, in Canada, doing in terms of preserving and renewing this natural resource, so plentiful in this country? We could be doing more, at least in Ontario. A lot more, as publisher Donna Jacobs discovered when she interviewed Gordon Miller, Ontario's environment commissioner. The province will plant 50 million trees in Southern Ontario over the next decade but Mr. Miller says that's simply not enough. He's pushing for 100 million trees a year, which would boost the 10-year campaign to one billion trees planted.

Also in our cover package, we also look at the effect the oil sands are having on a section of the boreal forest — a crucial bird habitat, and the effect oil exploration is having on Alberta's environment.

But it's not all bad news. One expert from the Washington-based Pew Environment Group reports that Canada's boreal forest is on its way to becoming the world's No. 1 protected forest.

Further in our Dispatches section, we

offer a look at the state of corruption in the world. Berlin-based Transparency International does an annual assessment of corruption in countries. Denmark edged out New Zealand this year for the top spot (read: the least corrupt) and Canada ranks sixth in the world. The world's most corrupt nations: Somalia, followed by Myanmar and Afghanistan which tied for second place.

Up front in *Diplomatica*, columnist Fen Hampson visits Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and shares his views on the geopolitics of this region. We also have my interview with Chief of Defence Staff Walter Natynczyk, who talks about the "new normal" in the Canadian Forces after years of combat in Afghanistan. The busy general had to reschedule the interview three times and we eventually met just two days before Canada announced its plans to extend its military mission in Afghanistan, this time in a non-combat role.

Books editor George Fetherling's contribution for this issue is a revealing look into a Pulitzer Prize-winning American author who spent much of her early life in China, based on the new biography *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth* by Hilary Spurling. He also highlights a book by Ottawa writer Eric Enno Tamm. Mr. Fetherling calls *The Horse That Leaps through Clouds* — part travel, part history — "a wonderfully fat new work."

Margaret Dickenson brings another episode from her Rogers TV show to our pages and wine columnist Pieter Van den Weghe chooses rich wine, sherry and ale for winter savouring. Our featured residence this time is the home Icelandic Ambassador Sigríður Anna Thórdardóttir shares with her husband, Jon Thorsteinsson. Our history piece, by Laura Neilson Bonikowsky, is about the Doukhobors, Christian Russians who emigrated to Canada en masse at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

We hope you enjoy in our winter edition.

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor.

## UP FRONT

The great grey owl that graces our cover is one of the world's largest and is prevalent across Canada, particularly in the boreal forest. That makes him the perfect ambassador for our cover package on the UN's International Year of Forests. It begins with a story on the work of Ontario's watcher of the woods, Gordon Miller, who cautions that the province should plant more trees than it plans, and it should start now.



## CONTRIBUTORS

### Fen Osler Hampson



Fen Osler Hampson is Chancellor's Professor and Director of The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, at Carleton University in Ottawa. He holds a PhD from Harvard University, an MSc. (Econ.) degree from the London School of Economics and a B.A. (Hon.) from the University of Toronto. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Dr. Hampson is the author/co-author of nine books and editor/co-editor of more than 25 other volumes. In addition, he is the author of almost 100 articles and book chapters on international affairs. His most recent book, *The Global Power of Talk: Negotiating America's Interests*, will be published this spring.

### Margo Roston



Margo Roston's career began in television after finishing her B.A. at McGill and studying journalism at Carleton University. She started out producing an Ottawa Valley talent showcase for CJOH-TV but after running out of small Valley towns, she switched paths and moved over to the *Ottawa Journal* where she penned "Margo's People," the capital's premiere social and diplomatic column. When the *Journal* folded in 1980, she joined the *Ottawa Citizen* as social doyenne-in-residence, covering the social and diplomatic goings-on and keeping up with the fashion scene. Now retired, she follows culture in Ottawa, travels with her husband and visits her three children and two grandsons.

# The Internet is God's present to China



By Liu Xiaobo

In October 1999, I finished three years of jail and returned home. There was a computer there and it seemed that every visiting friend was telling me to use it. I tried a few times but felt that I could not write anything while facing a machine and insisted on writing with a fountain pen. Slowly, under the patient persuasion and guidance of my friends, I got familiar with it and cannot leave it now. As someone who writes for a living, and as someone who participated in the 1989 democracy movement, my gratitude towards the Internet cannot be easily expressed.

The Internet has made it easier to obtain information, contact the outside world and submit articles to overseas media. It is like a super-engine that makes my writing spring out of a well. The Internet is an information channel that the Chinese dictators cannot fully censor, allowing people to speak and communicate, and it offers a platform for spontaneous organization.

The government can control the press and television, but it cannot control the Internet. The scandals that are censored in the traditional media are disseminated through the Internet. The government now has to release information and officials may have to publicly apologize.

Chinese Christians say that although the Chinese lack any sense of religion, their God will not forsake the suffering Chinese people. The Internet is God's present to China. It is the best tool for the Chinese people in their project to cast off slavery and strive for freedom.

*The Sunday Times*, April 28, 2009

## Why we gave Liu Xiaobo a Nobel Prize

Some people have said that giving the prize to Mr. Liu may actually worsen conditions for human-rights advocates in China.

But this argument is illogical: it leads

to the conclusion that we best promote human rights by keeping quiet. If we keep quiet about China, who will be the next country to claim its right to silence and non-interference? This approach would put us on a path toward undermining the Universal Declaration and the basic tenets of human rights. We must not and cannot keep quiet. No country has a right to ignore its international obligations.

China has every reason to be proud of what it has achieved in the last 20 years. We want to see that progress continue, and that is why we awarded the Peace Prize to Mr. Liu. If China is to advance in harmony with other countries and become a key partner in upholding the values of the world community, it must first grant freedom of expression to all its citizens.

*By Thorbjorn Jagland, chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize committee*

*The New York Times*, October 23, 2010

## China Daily: 'Certain restrictions' apply

Thorbjorn Jagland, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee and some other Western critics, recently published articles trying to justify the Committee's decision to award this year's Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo.

They tried to imply that human rights are superior to sovereignty and that the international community has the right to intervene in the internal affairs of China. There is no consensus among the international community that "human rights are superior to sovereignty."

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emphasizes that freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities and it may therefore be subjected to certain restrictions so as to respect the rights or reputation of others, and the protection of national security, public order or public health or morals. The covenant also clearly stipulates that propaganda for war or advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred shall be prohibited by law.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other international conventions also set out restrictions on freedom of expression.

What the Chinese people do not ac-

cept are attacks against China's judicial sovereignty, or rhetoric seeking to subvert Chinese law or awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to persons trying to overthrow the government.

Historically, the committee has awarded the Peace Prize to Andrey Dmitriyevich Sakharov, Mikhail Gorbachev and even the Dalai Lama. The logic behind the selection of recipients is clear: those who try hard to split or oppose a Communist country or cater to the West's agenda will be selected.

November 1, 2010

## A letter written by Liu Xia, wife of Liu Xiaobo

Dear Friends,

I am Liu Xia, Liu Xiaobo's wife. When news first arrived that Xiaobo had received the Nobel Peace Prize, I, like all of you, was both moved and thankful from the bottom of my heart. I want to thank both the international society and the Nobel Peace Prize committee for recognizing Xiaobo's efforts during all these years.

I also want to thank the friends who have supported Xiaobo for so many years and all the signatories who signed Charter 08. Xiaobo says this peace award actually belongs to all the souls who died on June 4 [1989] in Tiananmen Square when the Chinese army attacked human rights demonstrators gathered there by the millions. I think this award belongs to all of the fearless Chinese who protect the dignity of every single Chinese citizen.

I regret to say that since October 8, [when the announcement was made], I have been under house arrest and am no longer free to leave my home, making it very difficult to communicate with the outside world. I don't know how long this situation will last. I want to express my strong protest towards this limitation on my freedom. I call on the authorities to abide by the law, stop obstructing my daily routine, and respect the requests from both inside and outside the country to release Xiaobo and allow us to once again live a normal life.

So while I can still send information out, I would like to openly invite Xiaobo's peers and friends to attend the Peace Prize ceremony taking place in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 10. [She lists from memory the names of 150 individuals.]

November 5, 2010



# Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia: East confronts West



With the discovery of oil in Azerbaijan in the late 19th Century, Russian ambitions to control the region intensified.



FEN OSLER HAMPSON

**T**he South Caucasus has historically been an arena of conflict. Much like the Balkans, it is a region where East and West meet and three great empires — the Russian, the Ottoman, and the Safavids (Persians) — clashed in earlier times.

Today, it is a region where other fires burn. These are the fires of economic ambition and growth, of political transformation and unrest, and of violent conflict resulting from the uncontrolled assertion of identity and religion. With the discovery of oil in Azerbaijan in the late 19th Century, Russian ambitions to control the region intensified. The manipulation of ethno-religious differences by Russia and other external actors has long been part of

imperial ambitions from the Tsarist times, through the Bolshevik era, to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The South Caucasus is also a region which illustrates, on a broader scale, how regional and global geopolitical tectonic plates are shifting, creating new opportunities for social, economic, and political interaction, while simultaneously igniting old tensions and rivalries.

Three states — Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia — form this region whose geographical boundaries are delineated to the north by Russia, to the southeast and southwest by Iran and Turkey respectively, and to the east and west by the vast, dark, brooding inland waters of the Black and Caspian seas. Although some would argue that a region should be defined by common values, shared interests, and a keen sense of identity, such elements do not exist here.

What we do find is a “region” that is characterized by deeply-rooted, highly interdependent relationships which have been shaped over the years by the collision of culture and history, along with shifting patterns of trade, investment, social migration and interaction. It is also

an “open” region because of the special relationships that the countries of the region have forged with their neighbours and others — Azerbaijan with Turkey and Georgia, Armenia with Russia, and Georgia with Azerbaijan and the West.

Azerbaijan is the region’s most remarkable success story due to its rich oil and gas resources. The ancient Persians called it Atupatakan, “a place where sacred fire is preserved.” In Greek mythology, Prometheus was chained to the Caucasus Mountains on Zeus’ orders because he had stolen fire from the gods. Today, there are a still number of sites in the South Caucasus where whole mountainsides are on fire, where escaping gases from the ground have been ignited.

Azerbaijan has a large, Turkic-majority, Muslim-majority population, but is also one of the most moderate Muslim countries in the world. The country’s commitment to secularism is no doubt the product of years of Communist rule and Soviet hostility to Islamic culture and traditions. But the government also worries about cross-border fundamentalist pressures because almost one-third of neighbouring Iran’s population is formed by the Azeri

minority concentrated around Tabriz.

Before gaining its independence from the Soviets in 1991, Azerbaijan enjoyed brief independence in the period 1918-1921. Azerbaijan's GDP, which today is nearing \$100 billion (USD), dwarfs that of its neighbours. It has enjoyed double-digit levels of economic growth in recent years, notwithstanding the recent global recession, because of its booming oil exports which have also contributed to growth in construction, banking, transportation and real estate.

Much of Azerbaijan's oil is exported through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline, which crosses the territories of Georgia and Turkey, where it is shipped by tanker to points westwards. Plans are afoot to boost Azerbaijan's natural gas production with the discovery of reservoirs deep underneath the Caspian Sea.

In recent years, the government has made a concerted effort to use its oil and gas revenues to diversify the country's economic base in order to promote sustainable, long-term growth. The country has become a magnet for Chinese, Korean and other sources of foreign investment and it is making progress in introducing market-based reforms. To be sure, years



A Russian tank in South Ossetia in 2008.

of Soviet rule left a legacy of entitlement and corruption in the public and private sectors that is hard to shake. However, what strikes every visitor is the vigorous animation of its people, especially the young, who identify strongly with Western culture and values and aspire to live in a country that is democratic and committed to human rights.

Georgia was seized by the Russian tsars in the 19th Century. It enjoyed a brief

period of independence from 1918-1921, but then fell under Soviet rule. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Georgia struggled to assert its independence. Its current president, Mikheil Saakashvili, was elected to power in 2004.

Although the country has embarked on a series of widespread reforms to liberalize and open the economy to foreign investment and to promote democratic development, it has struggled against Russian support for secessionist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Following military action by the Georgian military in South Ossetia, Russian forces intervened in 2008. Though Russian troops have since been "withdrawn," Russia has unilaterally chosen to recognize the independence of these two breakaway regions.

Like Azerbaijan, the Georgian economy in recent years has witnessed unprecedented growth, supported, in part, by its role as a transit point for Azeri oil and gas exports. Mining (manganese and copper, in particular) and agriculture are the staples of the economy, although construction and financial services are becoming important new sectors.

Armenia possesses the weakest economy in the region and was hard hit by the

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global recession, notwithstanding the fact that it enjoyed high growth rates before the crisis. The country has paid a high economic price for its ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan. Following its invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1994, Turkey closed its border with Armenia. Countervailing pressures from Azerbaijan have thwarted recent Turkish efforts, instigated by the U.S., to open its border with Armenia and improve relations. Armenia continues to depend heavily on its commercial and aid linkages with Russia, as well as the remittances it receives from the large Armenian diaspora around the globe.

The foreign policies of countries in the South Caucasus region are increasingly assertive and independent, being driven by changing conceptions of their own national interest and their new-found sources of power and leverage. They are moving from being pawns in the global power game to being independent and influential actors in their own right. Azerbaijan and Georgia, in particular, are looking to expand and strengthen their ties with the European and the Atlantic region via energy exports, trade, investment, the development of new transportation cor-

ridors, and security cooperation. Azerbaijan's policies are driven by the strength of its energy sector, its desire to diversify its economy, and the fact that it, like Georgia, sees itself as a bridge between Europe and Asia. Its influence also derives from its close relations with Turkey.

Armenia's influence comes largely from the strength of its diaspora, which is seen by many to be an obstacle to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. However, it is also the case that the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh has been derailed by the conflicting motivations of members of the so-called Minsk group (comprised of representatives from a dozen countries and co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States), which was set up to mediate a resolution to the conflict.

Some believe that Russia is also using the continuing dispute to exert pressure on Baku, which has been trying to reduce Russian influence over its energy sector and export markets. The European Union, which could potentially play an important role in resolving the conflict, has been kept at bay by France and Russia — the latter has objected to the deployment of a full-scale EU mission. The United States has

been less engaged in conflict management and security of the region in recent years, distracted by its ongoing problems in Afghanistan and Iraq and its own economic difficulties. As Thomas de Waal, a close observer of this conflict writes: "Although the Minsk Process has appeared poised to deliver success on several occasions, it seems stuck in a perpetual cycle of frustration and disappointment."

These festering conflicts are not simply matters of local concern; their escalation would have global consequences, not least because of the region's geostrategic importance and its key role as an energy producer with critical supply lines to the West. Complacency is not an option. There is a risk that the conflict will be manipulated by elites who see opportunity for personal political gain and/or by external actors who don't want to see the countries of the region become stronger. The region will not live up to its full potential until these problems are addressed.

Fen Osler Hampson is Chancellor's Professor and Director of The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Carleton University.



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## Helping Ottawa's 'hidden poor'

**W**hen the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade asked Ottawa's foreign diplomatic community to help out by donating food to its second annual food fair, the diplomats responded enthusiastically.

Robert Peck, outgoing chief of protocol, explained that the idea was to create a lunchtime international buffet that would raise money to contribute to worthwhile causes in Ottawa.

"We know there are plenty of good international causes, but there are also people in need in Ottawa," Peck said.

Menna Andrews, campaign leader for the Canada Workplace Government Charitable Campaign (CWGCC) at foreign affairs, echoed Mr. Peck's sentiments.

"Often people from other countries think things are just fine in Ottawa, but it's not true," Ms Andrews said. "There are hidden poor in Ottawa."

The food fair brought together staff from more than 50 embassies who made and presented food from their countries — often their national dishes. Some embassies made savoury offerings: the embassy of Japan, for example, brought large plates of hand-made sushi, while others, such as Venezuela, offered sweets.

Tickets for the fair cost \$15 and sold out within two days. It was held in the main lobby of the Lester B. Pearson building and ended up raising \$3,700 for the CWGCC. Money raised through this campaign is divided three ways — some goes to United Way agencies, some to health partners, such as the Canadian Cancer Society or the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, and some to Centre-Aide de l'Outaouais agencies.

Besides raising money for worthwhile



LOIS SIEGEL

Clockwise from top left: Siti Hazura Mohd Ghans, wife of Mohamed Hatimi Abas, Malaysia's acting high commissioner, holds a plate of Malaysian pastries called murtabak. • Paraguay's contribution, called mandi'o chyriry, which contains fried cassava, eggs, onions, and cheese. • Japan's sushi.

causes, the food fair is also a great opportunity for Canada's foreign affairs officers to meet with their foreign diplomatic counterparts on an informal basis, Ms Andrews said.

"It brings us all together," she said. "I'm sure the people from the embassies like to come to DFAIT and see some of the people they deal with, but on a different level."

In addition to bringing the food, many of the embassies also donated door prizes, such as bottles of wine, books and artifacts from their countries. A total of 75 of the 200 people who bought tickets won door prizes. They were invited to donate them back to the campaign's online auction, Ms Andrews said, and many did just that. ▢



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# Australia and New Zealand bid to host astronomy's next big — one square kilometre — thing



**FIRST NAME:** Andrew  
**LAST NAME:** Needs  
**CITIZENSHIP:** New Zealand  
**PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AS AMBASSADOR:** Jan. 13, 2010  
**PREVIOUS POSTINGS:** Australia and the Cook Islands



**FIRST NAME:** Justin  
**LAST NAME:** Brown  
**CITIZENSHIP:** Australia  
**PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AS AMBASSADOR:** Nov. 2, 2008  
**PREVIOUS POSTINGS:** Los Angeles, Brussels and Copenhagen

Star gazers, both professional and amateur, are closely following progress in one of the great global science projects of the 21st Century, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA). It's a radio telescope being developed by a global collaboration of 20 countries, including Canada, and it promises to revolutionize our understanding of the universe through new insights into physics and astronomy.

The scientific dimensions of the SKA are remarkable. Its several thousand antennas will have a total collecting area of approximately one square kilometre and make the SKA 50 times more sensitive than any other radio instrument. And it will be able to survey the sky more than 10,000 times faster than ever before.

The governments of Australia and New Zealand have united in a bid to host the SKA in our two countries, with a proposed core site in a sparsely populated region of the state of Western Australia. With a configuration of receiving stations extending 5,500 kilometres to New Zealand, the SKA will deliver the highest resolution images in all astronomy.

The SKA will enable science to address fascinating questions. By mapping a billion galaxies out to the edge of the universe, it will allow researchers to determine the processes by which galaxies formed and grew. It will also be able to fill in the gap — known to astronomers as the “dark ages” — between 300,000 years after the Big Bang (when the universe became transparent) and a billion years later when young galaxies were first sighted. The SKA can also detect extra-terrestrial radio wavelength emissions, and may even be able to spot other planets capable of supporting life.

The winning bidders — South Africa is also vying for the honour on behalf of the Southern African region — will be chosen by an international SKA steering committee of representatives from national funding and scientific agencies later this year or early next.

Construction of the SKA, the cost of which is still being calculated, is scheduled to begin in 2016, with the first observations expected by 2019. The location of the SKA will be crucial to delivering high-quality results and it is of pivotal importance that the telescope array, particularly

the core site, be located in unpopulated areas with low levels of man-made radio interference.

The project enjoys bipartisan support in both Australia and New Zealand, and we want to ensure that researchers worldwide are able to make the most of the opportunities that will flow when the telescope is up and running.

The SKA requires a high level of collaboration between scientists from around the world. The University of Calgary is at the forefront of Canada's involvement, and engineers at the University's Schulich



ROSS FORSYTH, CSIRO

A milestone: Looking out from the reflector dish of one of the new antennas at the Murchison Radio-Astronomy Observatory.



School of Engineering are charged with designing the SKA's roughly 20 million receivers, in collaboration with scientists and engineers nationwide including those at the National Research Council's Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics.

Canada will also host the 2011 International SKA Forum, scheduled for July 6 in Banff, Alta. — the first time the forum has taken place in North America. This annual event brings together the scientific community, government and industry to raise the profile of the SKA and make decisions on its development.

The Australian and New Zealand joint bid proposes that the core site be located in the Shire of Murchison in Western Australia, one of the most sparsely inhabited areas on Earth. The Shire of Murchison covers an area roughly the size of the Netherlands but is home to only 110 people. This low population makes the area almost radio silent and increases the flexibility to place antenna stations on or near ideal sites.

Our governments are already working together to develop new radio astronomy infrastructure. In May, six radio telescopes across Australia and New Zealand linked up over a distance of 5,500 kilometres to act as one giant telescope, using the region's extensive broadband infrastructure. This will be a valuable asset for the SKA should our bid be successful, and promises to reduce the cost and complexity of building the SKA at our proposed site.

We achieved another milestone in October when we built five new antennas for the SKA Pathfinder radio telescope — an important demonstration of the project's future technology. The five antennas will join the first SKA Pathfinder antenna, successfully built and tested earlier in the year at the Murchison Radio-Astronomy Observatory. A total of 36 antennas are due for completion by 2013.

Preparation for the SKA is progressing quickly, and governments around the world will be involved in the site-selection process. With ongoing commitment to investing in leading-edge research, Australia and New Zealand have based their bid to host the SKA on a shared record of excellence in radio astronomy.

We believe our proposal will allow the SKA to realize its full potential. This means maximizing the benefits for all countries — not only in astronomy, but also in applications for green energy and high-tech communications that will benefit generations to come. ■

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# France invests in Canada's success

By *Francois Delattre*



**M**y focus, as ambassador of France to Canada, is to take the historic France-Canada partnership to a new level with enhanced strategic priorities. After Canada's hosting of the G8 and G20 Summits, France took over the presidency of the G20 from South Korea in November and will take over the presidency of the G8 from Canada in this month. It is symbolic that our two countries, which are among the founders of the G8 and the G20, once again stand side by side in their presidencies of these gatherings. France has strong objective for its presidencies. For the G8, France will place an emphasis on promoting partnership with Africa. With respect to the G20, our focus will be three-fold: reform of the international monetary system, better control of the volatility in the prices of raw materials and promotion of global governance reform.

In addition, France is absolutely committed to supporting the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) currently being negotiated between Canada and the European Union (EU), as well as bilateral economic and trade partnerships with Canada. France is today the fourth-largest foreign investor in Canada, with French companies currently providing 80,000 high-quality jobs throughout the country.

French investment is not only significant, but it also reflects the diversity and the resilience of the Canadian economy itself. French investment can be found in all economic sectors and more particularly in those that have a high technological component. With the energy sector alone (from Total's \$20 billion investment in Alberta to the Alstom/TransAlta partnership in state-of-the-art carbon-capture and storage in the oil sands, from EDF and GDF Suez investments in renewable energies to

the investment made by Bathium Canada and Renault-Nissan in electric vehicles), there is little doubt that France and French companies not only see potential in this great country but are also directly invested in its success.

French investment is also focused on the future — and in research and innovation in particular. This explains why a central pillar of France-Canada relations is university co-operation. Collaborative research between universities and research institutions in our two countries is growing at an exceptional pace. Programs such as the France-Canada Research Fund (FCRF), which recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary, support research on both sides of the Atlantic and forge new and lasting partnerships.

These initiatives are already bearing fruit, exemplified in productive cooperation in a number of areas. In the field of neurosciences and the fight against neuro-degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, joint research between the French Brain and Spine Institute and the Universities of British Columbia, Toronto, Montreal and McGill is providing crucial insight that may one day lead to a cure for this horrific disease. French and Canadian expertise in polar research is also coming together in early 2011 with the creation of a France-Canada joint research group, sponsored by the CNRS (French National

Centre for Scientific Research) and housed at the University of Laval in Quebec, with the goal of developing a Franco-Canadian Polar Research Observatory.

Canadian universities are also showing a rising interest in double- and joint-degree programs. Graduates from these programs obtain a Master's or PhD degree, recognized in both countries and at a European level, and benefit from an invaluable experience and opportunity. This unprecedented co-operation strengthens our respective positions and competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy.

My role and the embassy's mission are thus to champion a partnership between France and Canada that is stronger and better adapted to tackle the challenges of the 21st Century. In this respect, we should never forget that our countries' shared history and values are still our best guide to confront together the current challenges we face. As ambassador, my role is also to convey to my country the lessons learned from the Canadian experience. In the two years I have been in Canada, I have not only discovered an exceptional and magnificent country but also a people who have so much to offer to the world.

*Francois Delattre is France's ambassador to Canada. Reach him at [politique@ambafrance-ca.org](mailto:politique@ambafrance-ca.org) or 613-562-3741.*



French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister Stephen Harper — seen here at the G8 in Muskoka in June — will have both chaired the G8 and G20 Summits within a year of each other.

# New Zealand: A vital trade partner for Canada

By Andrew Needs



**B**efore I left New Zealand to take up my role as high commissioner in Canada, I spoke with my prime minister, the foreign minister and the head of the New Zealand foreign service. The theme from those conversations was how we could further strengthen our trade and economic relationship.

While two-way trade in goods is significant, sitting at \$757 million in 2009, it is relatively static compared to the trading relationship New Zealand has with many other bilateral partners. In 2009, New Zealand exported \$454 million worth of goods to Canada consisting mainly of meat and dairy products, wine and fruit. Over the same period, Canada exported \$303 million, which included minerals, pork and aerospace parts and equipment.

New Zealand products in Canada are by no means restricted to food and beverages. Every day, Canadians enjoy a range of other New Zealand products, including New Zealand merino wool clothing (the Icebreaker brand) and high-end appliances (Fisher and Paykel). Canadians also watch movies where the digital animation and visual effects were created in New Zealand (by Weta Digital) as seen in *Avatar* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Prime Minister John Key visited Canada in April 2010 and it was an opportunity to continue his regular discussions with Prime Minister Harper — initiated when they first met at the APEC leaders meeting in 2008.

There is no question that both leaders want an enhanced economic relationship to complement the work we already do in other areas of shared interest: Afghanistan, the United Nations and other defence and security concerns, the Commonwealth, parliamentary and legal issues.

Like us, Canada is pursuing an increas-



High Commissioner Needs encourages Canadians to visit New Zealand's wine regions.

ingly diversified trade and economic strategy in the Asia-Pacific, and recognizes the value of deepening its political and economic connectivity in the region. Regional trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership currently under negotiation (Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam) will provide a dynamic platform for enhanced trade and economic activity to economies on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Enhancing the people-to-people links is also important to us; this is supported by direct flights between Vancouver and Auckland, which contribute to a healthy two-way flow of tourists, students and family members that live on either side of the Pacific Ocean.

We welcome the increasing number of young Canadians pursuing working holidays, temporary work or educational opportunities in New Zealand. Encouraging youth mobility helps to deepen our links and economic connectivity especially as a new generation of New Zealanders and Canadians become the political and economic leaders of tomorrow.

New Zealanders are innovative and creative. The distance from North America and Europe used to be a barrier but our dynamic way of thinking has helped us to bridge that gap and create our own unique identity as a country.

For New Zealand, distance has become less relevant with the quality, efficiency

and speed of communication and transport links, allowing an entrepreneur in Auckland to do business in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary or Vancouver in real time and goods to be delivered overnight by air and through excellent shipping links.

With the support of the New Zealand team based in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver, my focus is to enhance New Zealand's connectivity with the federal and provincial governments, businesses and the tourism, science and research communities across Canada to grow the relationship between our two countries.

The team operates with support from sector specialists from New Zealand Tourism, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Investment New Zealand, New Zealand Winegrowers, Immigration New Zealand, New Zealand 2011 and the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, based in New York, Washington and Los Angeles. We are collectively known as "NZ Inc."

Canada's hosting of the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver was a wonderful opportunity to profile this country's unique culture, diversity and sporting achievements.

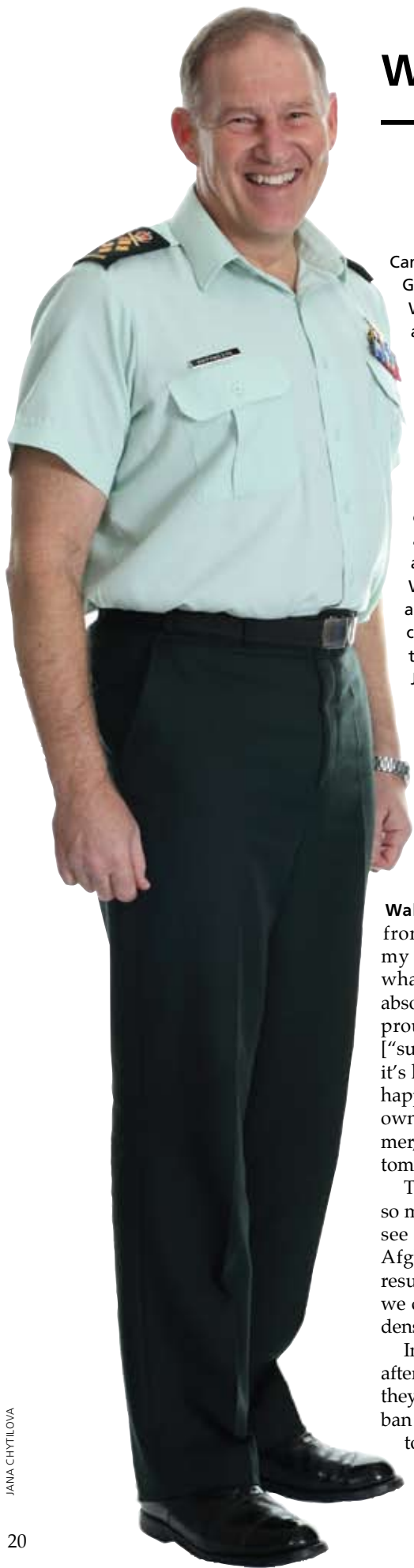
New Zealand will host the Rugby World Cup from Sept. 9 to Oct. 23, 2011, and it's our chance to showcase our country and our biggest asset — our people. We are encouraging Canadians to join us in celebrating this global sporting event, in particular on Oct. 2 when New Zealand plays Canada.

Beyond the rugby, however, there will be a unique opportunity for Canadian business people, researchers and entrepreneurs to see what New Zealand has to offer as a place to do business, and the potential it presents as a strategic launch pad for trade opportunities into the Asia-Pacific region.

For travel, trade, rugby and more, please go to the New Zealand high commission Ottawa website: [www.nzembassy.com/canada](http://www.nzembassy.com/canada) or visit [www.nzte.govt.nz](http://www.nzte.govt.nz), and [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com), [www.nz2011.govt.nz](http://www.nz2011.govt.nz), all of which are useful sites.

Andrew Needs is New Zealand's high commissioner to Canada. Reach him through his blog, where he outlines his activities, at <http://blogs.mfat.govt.nz/andrew-needs> or 613-238-5991.

## Winning ground — and holding it — in Afghanistan



Canadian Forces' Chief of Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, grew up in Winnipeg and had jobs as a paperboy and burger flipper before joining the military in 1975 and rising through the ranks to the top job, which he did in 2008. For the past four years, he has skipped Christmas with his family — all three of his children are in the Canadian Forces as well — to spend it in Afghanistan with his troops, often taking politicians and diplomats along for the ride. He lives in Ottawa, and, while his heart remains with the Winnipeg Jets (the team now playing as the Phoenix Coyotes in Arizona), he cheers for the Sens from his post in the nation's capital. *Diplomat's* editor, Jennifer Campbell, sat down with him late last fall — just before the federal government announced its plans to extend Canada's military engagement in Afghanistan in a non-combat role.

***Diplomat Magazine:*** Would you speak to Canada's engagement in Afghanistan?

**Walter Natynczyk:** I've just come back from Afghanistan. This was probably my 12th visit in about four years and what our men and women are doing is absolutely fascinating. I couldn't be more proud. This year, we've seen the uplift ["surge"] of U.S. forces in the region and it's having a significant impact on what's happening on the ground. While even my own soldiers are asking about next summer, my [priority] is on making progress tomorrow, next week, and next month.

The [people on the ground] have done so much since my last visit in July. I could see the qualitative improvement in the Afghan national army. I could see [the results] of the uplift in the forces. When we clear an area, we have sufficient troop density to stay.

In the past, the Afghans' great concern, after we've gone through a town, was that they were left to intimidation of the Taliban thugs — that there was no one there to protect them from the intimidation.

Now, for the first time, the troop allocations by NATO are sufficient

to have an enduring presence. Two years ago, we had about 3,000 Canadians in our operations base in Kandahar Province, which is a huge area. Today, there are 12,000 U.S. soldiers alongside us.

Perhaps even more significant is that four years ago, in 2006, when we were engaged in Operation Medusa, we had about two platoons of Afghan army, about 50 people. Today, we're mentoring about 4,500 Afghan soldiers in Kandahar province. That's having a significant effect, not only in terms of their very presence but also in the trust that the Afghan population have in their own people, whether police or army.

We've found that in all operations where we weren't speaking the native language we didn't know what "normal" looks like. The Afghan army does, the Afghan army police do, and the villagers and farmers and the tribal elders do. But for those village elders to provide the information to the Afghan Army and police, they have to feel secure.

It was on this [most recent] trip, in eastern Panjwaye, that we saw this change because, for the first time, we moved into a place and the Afghan army stayed. We saw the Afghan population sharing information. We're hearing anecdotally that they're providing less support to the Taliban, less shelter, food, medical supplies.

These are small signs which we haven't seen before. These signs connected back to what we saw when we visited Kabul. The qualitative improvements are significant. Only 10 percent of Afghans are literate but, in November, 30,000 people are engaged with or have completed a literacy program in the Afghan army. They projected [that this number] would rise in December to 40,000 and by next spring to 100,000. The [conclusion] I've heard, and it's absolutely true, is that education is a force multiplier.

Imagine this vignette, which occurred in Afghanistan before we got there. In one region, there was a company of really well-trained Afghan army soldiers. They had gone through all the training and had good leadership. But they got ambushed and a number of soldiers were wounded. Nobody in the company could read. No



one could read a map and describe on the radio where they were, using number grid coordinates. No one could call for artillery fire. So literacy is a force multiplier. The training we're providing in Kabul and Kandahar is having a significant effect.

[Regarding future engagement], I've said to soldiers and to the leadership of the Canadian Forces that we'll be true to the parliamentary motion which says that the Canadian forces will leave Kandahar province in the summer of 2011 and that this will end our [combat] mission. We are working with our NATO allies for a seamless transition. This is like a relay race where we're sprinting to the finish in order to transfer the baton to the people who are going to keep on running.

Looking at the regions that we're in, these locations are key. As goes Kandahar, so goes the country. We can't let up in terms of our focus on the mission. I've got great confidence we will continue to build the security forces, to partner with them in the towns that they're in — and, similarly, to work with Foreign Affairs and CIDA on building governance.

We've seen the leadership in Daman district and Panjwaye district grow as we're able to assist the Afghans with development projects that affect the lives of their constituents. If you keep complaining that your district leader can't provide anything, you're going to go to the power broker — someone who can accommodate your needs. We're seeing now that these district governors are showing results to their constituents.

**DM:** The former Afghan ambassador to Canada — Jawed Ludin — repeatedly asked Canada to stay on to train Afghan police and armed forces. Do you agree that this is important?

**WN:** Absolutely. It's not only what happens out there in the field. It's what happens in training facilities scattered across the country. We've sponsored the junior officers' staff college; there's also a senior officers' staff college. We have four Afghan cadets attending Royal Military College here in Canada. I've met with them and they're doing exceptionally well. I would say that, though this is the end of the military mission, this is not the end of Canada's missions, which still involve CIDA, Foreign Affairs, and through them, sponsorship of Afghan police training. There are other ways and means to provide support. We're working with our government partners to determine how you continue all these other training programs.

**DM:** Has the engagement in Afghanistan — the first time in decades our soldiers have faced active combat as opposed to peacekeeping — changed the Canadian Forces?

**WN:** I would say that the Canadian Forces has a new normal. Soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, special forces — all have great confidence in their skills and their abilities have been proven in a hard operational field.

We've been in awful situations before. Bosnia, 15 years ago, was a combat theatre. But our UN mandate was to provide

[In Afghanistan,] we're doing various pieces of the peace-keeping and the peace-building missions. If you're in one of the quieter provinces, in some cases, you're peace-keeping because you're monitoring what's happening in a fairly quiet area. In other areas, it's pretty tense.

To a degree, it's peace-enforcement with knowledge of what's going on and trying to keep a lid on it. We are in a bad neighbourhood. [The job] is peace-building from the base up. [Take] the Daman district and the model village where we had to go about 18 months ago. There had been no



COMBAT CAMERA

General Walter Natynczyk says there is no worse day than the day a Canadian soldier dies. "But we have to all be strong."

support for humanitarian supplies. We weren't equipped to be able to stop the violence. We were spectators to a violent action, unable, through mandate or equipment, to intervene. We've had a lot of issues with our own people because of that inability.

Rwanda was the same kind of environment. There are three levels of peacekeeping: peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and peace-building, which is what we are now doing. [It's] counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, governance, development, training, all at the same time and all combined with nation-building.

ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in there at all. We went in with a good district governor, providing a security blanket, partnering with the Afghan police and bringing in projects through CIDA and DFAIT and empowering the governor so he had the respect of the village elders.

Two years ago, when we rolled in, there wasn't a single school. Last year, there were four. Today there are 26. We're doing the same thing now in Panjwaye, a tougher neighbourhood. The difference is that they see what's happening next door and they like it. Now we have more Afghan police

and army. When we move in to an area, we stay. The context is changing.

**DM:** Can you tell me a story that's stuck with you?

**WN:** I have a lot and a lot of them are sad. I just had a great doc come in — Ray Wiss is his name — and he's written these two books [*FOB Doc* and *A Line in the Sand*]. He's the forward operating base doctor. As I look at the pictures (in these books), the memories come back. I have so many memories of seeing soldiers, sailors, airmen and women in various circumstances. I have visited members in hospital when they're injured and then seeing them many years later. I ask myself: 'As an institution, are we taking care of that person and his or her family?'

I see how we've evolved as a military, as an army, navy, air force. In 2006, we had light-armoured vehicles in Operation Medusa; today, our force has, if not the best, among the best, equipment of any contingent in Afghanistan. [Operation Medusa was a Canadian-led offensive that began in September 2006 in the Taliban stronghold Panjwaye west of Kandahar City. Four Canadian soldiers were killed.]



COMBAT CAMERA

General Natynczyk has spent each of the last five Christmases in Afghanistan.

When I think of the armoured heavy logistics truck [the Mercedes Benz vehicles that replaced the Canadian army's aging previous-generation models and which are designed to protect against improvised explosive devices and ballistic threats] I think about a private — she stood about 5'2" — getting into a 16-tonne truck, driving in a convoy. A suicide bomb truck came up beside her. The American helicopters were providing escort for them. They called her and said a suspicious vehicle was coming up on her left-hand side. She veered to the

right, the car blew up and she was fine. She was fine because of the great truck she was driving and because of the partnership with the folks in that helicopter.

Or, I talk to the soldiers and they show me pictures of Canadian tanks that rolled in to support an American company that was ambushed. Three soldiers killed, many wounded, and this time it was the Canadians who rolled in with their new Leopard tanks and their light-armoured vehicles to support an American company.

In both cases, the stories were told to

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me with pride — because they had the equipment and the skills to persevere in difficult circumstances.

Or on one visit, I'd just done a town hall meeting when the alarm went up. Suicide car bomb. A suicide bomber had walked into a nearby town and all eight casualties were rolling in, from young children to elderly citizens. They rolled into the medical clinic and these guys were doing a great job.

Or last Christmas Eve, I was standing on the turret of a tank. It was midnight. And there are two sergeants who had volunteered to do duty so the young privates and corporals could sleep on Christmas eve. I had (Secretary of State for Sport) Gary Lunn, (MP) Laurie Hawn and U.S. Ambassador David Jacobson with me and Minister Lunn was giving out Olympic mittens. So you have these two wonderful warriors getting their mittens.

That same evening, I was brushing my teeth — in this makeshift bathroom — with (*Calgary Herald* reporter) Michelle Lang. She gave us a good hard interview on Boxing Day and then I left. She had accompanied me on Christmas Day. We [visited] five operating bases on Christmas day. Three were Canadian bases and two were American bases where there were a significant number of Canadians. [Four days later, Michelle Lang was killed when the armoured vehicle she was riding in struck a roadside bomb. She was the first Canadian journalist to be killed in Afghanistan. Four Canadian soldiers were killed in the same blast.]

**DM:** Describe a day when you lose a soldier.

**WN:** There's no worse day for me. There's no worse duty anyone has than calling a grieving mom, a grieving spouse, a grieving father and then standing in Trenton [waiting for arrival of the casket.] But we have to all be strong because we have a duty on behalf of Canada to provide support to the family, to show that Canada shares in the family's grief.

At the same time, we need to provide support to these families on the worst possible days of their lives. So while there's grief, we have to put our game face on. I am just so proud of all the Canadians who line the highways, whether it be the 401 or the road from the airport to Val Cartier or the road from the airport to Steele Barracks in Edmonton. Or any of the small communities coast to coast where [people pay tribute]. It makes you proud to be Canadian. ▢



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**Tuesday, February 8, 2011**  
**Speaker: Galen G. Weston**  
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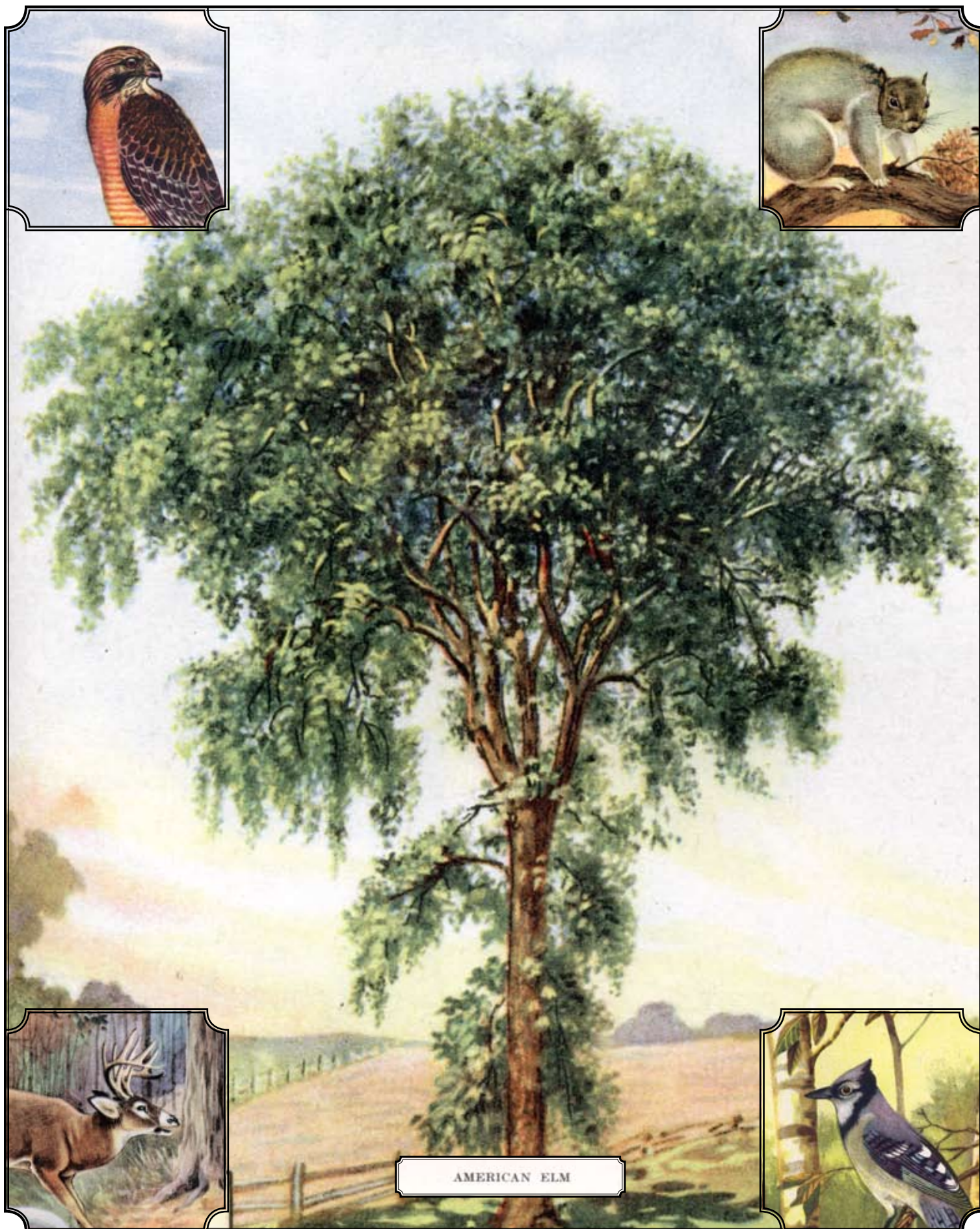
**Wednesday, March 2, 2011**  
**Speaker: Rick Hansen**  
*President and CEO,  
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AMERICAN ELM

# Lost legacy



Ontario's official watcher of the woods says we need to plant billions of trees in southern Ontario alone. Why? Beginning in the 1990s, the province presided over a calamitous decline in the number of trees it plants every year.

*By Donna Jacobs*

When their sheer beauty is not enough, trees more than earn their right to our keep. Even as they shade us, they are breathing in the carbon dioxide we and our machines exhale. In the finest alchemy imaginable, they return it to us as pure oxygen and cooling moisture. They support us in every way. Their timber forms the structures of our homes, the furnishings, the finishings. We write on their fibres, drink their fruits, eat their seeds, warm by their fires and thrive from their medicines.

They keep *us*. They give us the raw material that transforms into myriad products that help sustain one billion people on earth — one-sixth of us. They sustain the invisible denizens of the soil and air, the intricate creatures and plants that keep us company and nourish us. And where their beauty *is* enough, these stationery beings share their serenity with a stressed and hurried humanity.

In this issue, *Diplomat* magazine looks at the state of the trees and the facts of the forests, here and around the world. Gordon Miller is Ontario's official watcher of the woods. In this interview, the province's environmental commissioner shares his lofty goals for the province's trees and asks us to take out a planting policy for the insurance coverage that trees provide against natural and man-driven destruction, now and to come.





SUGAR MAPLE



Ontario's goal of planting 50 million trees in the next decade is "well and good," says Ontario's environment commissioner Gordon Miller. It's just not enough.

Not enough?

That's only 5 million trees a year, he says. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, Ontario's landowners, conservation authorities and forestry companies planted 20 million to 30 million trees a year in southern Ontario alone — and thought nothing of it.

"We were doing that relatively easily," he says. "So let's push it higher. Why can't we do 100 million a year? In 10 years, it would mean a billion trees."

And that would mean planting 10 to 20 trees a year (since not all would survive) for every man, woman and child in the province (population 13 million) — and doing it for a decade.

Mr. Miller, a biologist and ecologist who has served as Ontario's environment commissioner for 11 years, has scientific support for his sky-high goals. Environment Canada says that a healthy urban-suburban landscape requires a minimum 30 percent forest cover in its watersheds. Ontario has an average of 22 percent forest cover in its watersheds — the large land mass that drains into rivers.

For example, it will take a billion trees to restore proper forest cover in the Humber-Black Creek watersheds alone — and 175 years at the present rate of planting. The Humber River watershed covers 900 square kilometres west of Toronto, stretching from its headwaters in the Niagara Escarpment to its river mouth in Lake Ontario.

Few people have a quarrel with trees, or having many more trees. So what's the problem?

The explanation takes you back two or three decades, to the swift, systematic dismantling of Ontario's tree-planting systems that began under the leadership of Bob Rae, Ontario's NDP premier from October 1990 to June 1995. (He is now Liberal MP for Toronto-Centre and opposition foreign affairs critic.)

Between 1905 and 1996, the Ontario government operated nurseries, run by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which supplied landowners with 792 million seedlings — without charge until the introduction of a nominal fee in 1980.

In 1991-1992, nearly 30 million trees were planted on private lands in southern

Ontario. Then, premier Rae launched a reversal that, within a decade, saw plantings fall to less than two million.

In 1993, MNR closed its many nurseries and, in 1994, began negotiating the end of forest agreements with landowners. That year, the number of plantings plummeted to 10 million trees. Today, only one MNR seed production facility, the Ontario Tree Seed Plant near Barrie (which began in 1923), remains.

With tree plantings hitting an 80-year low, the debacle continued under Conservative premiers Mike Harris (1995-2002) and Ernie Eves (2002-2003). The number of plantings fell further when Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty first took office in 2003 and barely registered by 2004 (see graph on page 32).



In 2007, Mr. McGuinty announced a policy to plant 50 million trees across southern Ontario.

The old system had worked on an arrangement among public, private and conservation authority nurseries whose sales were guaranteed and often subsidized. A tree would cost between 10 cents and 25 cents. At today's prices, says Mr. Miller, a similar program might mean charging \$1 per tree, with the government matching it.

Right now, though, he says, "we're not challenging the system at all. We're not expanding our production — and it would require a big expansion."

In an acerbic paragraph in his latest annual report, Mr. Miller notes MNR's statement a year ago that the demand for trees exceeded the supply. But what demand and what supply?

While one might assume that "supply" is tree-seedling stock, Mr. Miller learned that it actually referred to MNR's funding, administered by Trees Ontario. MNR capped plantings at 2 million a year despite, says Mr. Miller, the "ability and interest to plant more."

By 2013, Trees Ontario, a Toronto-based NGO, projects planting 3.5 million trees under its 50 million tree program. Says Mr. Miller: "They're great people doing great work."

The goal is too modest, he says, only because the multi-year time line needed to move from seed to tree-in-the-ground makes the provincial funding too modest.

In fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, MNR funded Trees Ontario for the 50 million trees program with \$3.2 million each year, which pays for two million planted trees annually.

With Ontario's 50 million tree program and other tree-planting programs, Mr. McGuinty's initiative reverses Mr. Rae's catastrophic program cut. And Premier McGuinty's 2007 announcement was unequivocal: Ontario's record-setting goal is "the most ambitious program of its kind in North America and the highest goal of any single jurisdiction anywhere."

This initiative is Ontario's hefty contribution to the United Nations' Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign. (To see how well the UN's program is doing, go to the "clock" on the UN website [www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign](http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign).) The UN intensified its focus by declaring 2011 International Year of Forests.

By mid-December, worldwide, 12,090,482,372 trees had been pledged and 10,725,790,082 had been planted (towards a 13 billion-tree goal).

Canada's registered contributions totalled 126,363,528 trees — all planted and accredited, with planters' names and often locations duly noted by UN record-keepers. They include all quantities, from one tree at Ottawa's Venta Preparatory School, under the name of Tracey Quinn, to 165,450 trees for the City of Gatineau, under the name of Delphine Azoulay.

With its goal of one billion trees planted each year worldwide, the UN program was inspired by the winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai. She founded Kenya's Green Belt Movement which, since 1977, has planted more than 30 million trees in 12 African countries.



HICKORY



Robert Keen, a professional forester, prepared Trees Ontario's first business plan in 2002, became its program manager and is now its CEO. Trees Ontario's current goal, he says, is to support the planting of 10 million trees a year by 2015. Beyond its work with MNR, Trees Ontario oversees a number of planting programs and works with 65 partner organisations all around the province.\*

Since 2004, Trees Ontario has planted more than 10 million seedlings in Ontario. Says Mr. Keen: "We are the largest not-for-profit tree-planting partnership in North America."

The McGuinty government's policy reversal in 2007 was intended to be long-term. Mr. Keen notes that the government committed a total of \$79 million to realize its 50-million-tree goal by 2020.

The Ontario government's MNR tree-planting program provides the crucial elements — significant long-term and sustainable funding — that underpin both its own and other private planting programs in the province, says Mr. Keen.

If we are to increase planting levels significantly, he says, still greater funds in the long term are needed to support science and infrastructure, such as increasing nursery capacity.

If Environment Canada pitched in directly, with long-term federal funding, he was asked, how many more trees could be planted in Ontario? He estimates plantings could increase by 1 million this year alone.

You might think that you would need a great expanse of rural properties to plant millions of trees. Mr. Miller says you simply don't. He cites one of Ontario's most extreme examples of treelessness — Essex County's five percent forest cover. Essex County (near Windsor) is not a candidate for the 30 percent goal because its rich farmland. However, Essex does have public land — and so do other jurisdictions. There are roadsides to

plant. Even farmland "fence rows" have returned to favour.

People who want to help should turn their minds to these public spaces, Mr. Miller suggests. "We mow funny expanses of lawn for no apparent reasons," he says. "You can look at them as potential new little forests and woodlots. If we can imagine nice, mature trees and forests and put some benches underneath them, people would walk there, people would sit there, people would enjoy that."

Funding aside, two obstacles block Ontario's goal of planting one billion trees in the next 10 years, he says.

The first is professional management. "To sell you a tree in Spring 2011, a nursery has to have two-year-old stock, therefore planted in 2009. (Spruce trees take less



time and have a high success rate, hence their popularity.)

"But before that, you've got to get seed from the eco-zones where the trees are native and grow well.

"And before that — I'm trying to back it up — you have to have the seed back in the fall of 2008. But was it a good seed year? Was it a mast year (acorns, beechnuts, maple keys are called mast)?"

It may take several years of seed and mast collections to get enough seed for this project. Further, it takes manpower and knowledge to operate nurseries and properly to "set the seed" for its two-year growing season.

The second roadblock is human nature: "We're an impatient society," he says, "and selfish."

The comment reinforces a reflection

quoted in one of his reports: "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."

"It speaks to our society," he says. "We're so impatient — we haven't always been. You know the beautiful roadside trees, statuesque, in Southern Ontario? They were planted under government programs by farmers with the long-term plan that they would shade the roads. We don't think of planting stately giant trees because we know it's going to be a hundred years from now that they'll be overhanging streets. It's not worth planting them."

Is he asking people to bring back the hickories, the oaks, the maples?

"Yes," he says. "We're asking people to bring them back for our great-grandchildren because a lot of the trees we enjoy today were planted by our great-great grandfathers and great-great grandmothers. They gave them to us.

"What are we giving to the generations to come? I see this shorter selfishness north of Toronto all the time. When you get a residual woodlot with residual trees in it, people fight like hell to save them. I'm all for that. But they don't ever say, 'OK, here's a piece of green space, I want to fight to have it put into a forest.'"

He notes that the first thing builders do in subdivisions is to "take all the trees down and take all the topsoil off."

It's counterproductive; after all, treed properties are worth more and trees promote a sense of well-being.

Separation from nature is producing a huge amount of stress in people, says Mr. Miller. The modern "cultural insulating blanket" around us makes it hard for people to realize that we are animals.

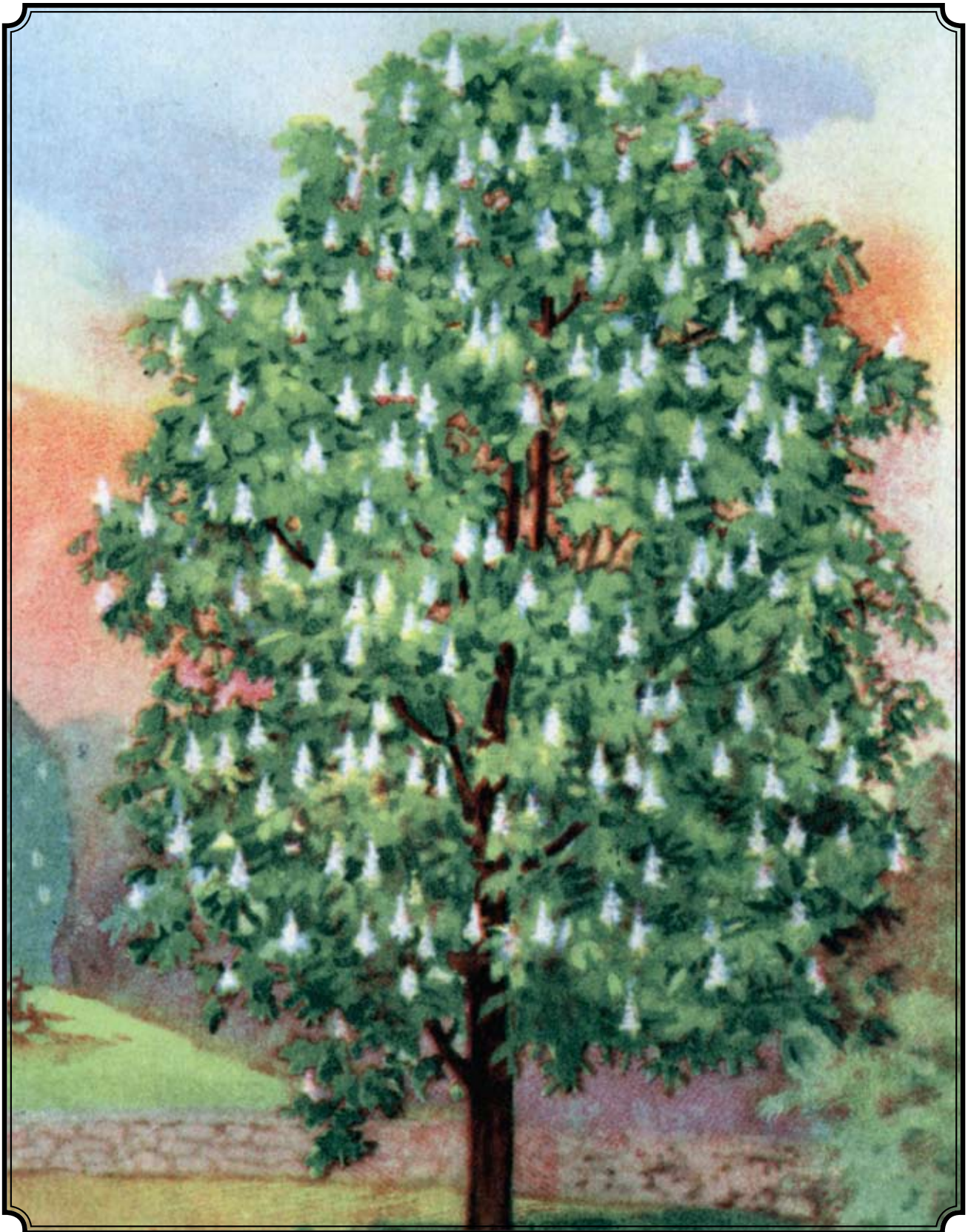
"We are creatures," he says. "The more we isolate ourselves from the natural processes to which we respond, the more stressed we become. It is interesting: People sit in their cars, in their traffic jams. They get angry and frustrated. They realize how unpleasant it is when they get some time off on a weekend or take a vacation in a natural setting."

Climate change, he says, makes proper reforestation all the more important.

"In 90 years, Southern Ontario will exist in Marathon, Ontario (on the northern shore of Lake Superior). While some animals can make the switch, how about

\*Ontario tree planting groups include conservation authorities, Ontario Stewardship Councils, municipal governments and community volunteer groups, private nurseries, forestry consultants, First Nations communities, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Ontario Forestry Association and the Wetland Habitat Fund. They're funded by donors, foundations and government grants.





HORSE-CHESTNUT

trees? How far do maple keys and acorns go in a year? Even with the help of animals burying them, perhaps 100 metres a year. “

He cites the white trillium, Ontario’s own provincial flower, as an example of the invisible, delicate inter-species relationships that sustain this woodland flower. The trillium produces oils that attract ants that carry the trillium’s seeds to their nests. “So you can imagine,” he says, “their dispersal is quite modest — maybe a few metres a year.”

Mr. Miller wants to create “forest pathways” to help the plants and animals migrate along natural corridors.

He says that once people grasp the situation — that the songbirds they love and feed and watch come and go with the seasons — are dependent on the treed areas to thrive, and increasingly, to survive, then planting trees or not cutting them down becomes a fairly simple sell.

“Songbirds are a huge group that are in danger of disappearing. When was the last time you heard a whip-poor-will?”

The whip-poor-will is a threatened species in Canada and Ontario. If the reasons for its decline — loss of habitat, predations (possibly by feral cats as it lays its eggs on the ground), perhaps loss of insect food (due to pesticides) — are not reversed, it will become endangered.

And the trees themselves are perishing. “Forests are under attack, he says — though by no means for the first time.”

In 1911, when chestnut blight came to North America, the people who picked sweet chestnuts for sale and the people who used the wood for fine furniture and rail fences, lost this species. Fewer than 200 exist, at any size, in Ontario; they are considered endangered both provincially and nationally. “People eventually won’t know there once was an American chestnut.”

He has planted American chestnuts in the front yard of his home in North Bay. “I think they’ve got to be the most northern American chestnuts growing in the North American continent,” he laughs. “And they’re growing, doing quite well although I haven’t been able to get them to produce viable seeds yet.” The tallest is seven or eight metres.

Starting in the 1960s, Dutch elm fungal disease wiped out American elms in Southern Ontario (many continue to die.) The emerald ash borer, a foreign invasive species, is attacking white, green and black ash with “a very high mortality rate.” And, more recently, butternut trees are now threatened by a fungal disease and are classed as endangered under the Ontario Endangered Species Act.



“When I ask you ‘When was the last time you heard a whip-poor-will?’ eventually you think back and notice. This [loss of environmental knowledge] is going on through the generations,” he says.

His worry list is long. He first mentions the arctic animals, the polar bears and harp seals whose ice is melting, along with arctic flora whose tundra will disappear. Alien species will inevitably move into warmer regions — species such as the opossum are already here. Species will interbreed as their territories overlap.

When he isn’t writing reports, reading papers and legislation and travelling the province, Gordon Miller is outdoors. And when he isn’t studying the structure of old growth forests and measuring the diameter of huge old trees, planting trees, and doing nature photography, he snorkels

## GET PLANTING

Trees Ontario’s website outlines two subsidized tree-planting programs for landowners (<http://www.treesontario.ca/programs>). Plan 2 requires applicants to work through tree-planting agencies.

**Plan 1:** The 50 Million Tree Program is a government-subsidized plan to encourage landowners to plant trees ([www.treesontario.ca/programs](http://www.treesontario.ca/programs)). Without these subsidies, planting a tree could cost landowners as much as \$3 or more per seedling. Minimum land size to qualify is usually 2 hectares (5 acres) though smaller areas, depending on their attributes, are considered. Your location must be an area where no forest has existed for at least 10 years.

Participants sign a 15-year agreement to properly maintain the trees and to contribute at least 15 cents per tree, with some additional costs possible.

**Plan 2:** The success of the Trees Ontario forest restoration program, which is free to recipients, will depend on the level of donor funding to Trees Ontario. It can cover the costs of literally thousands of trees whose owners must look after them for 15 years. To be eligible, applicants must organize tree-planting projects that make a significant contribution to “ecological sustainability at the local level” or apply for tree planting in an area where the program meets an ecological need.

The planting agency provides all services required to plant the trees, including site inspection, preparation of site plan, ordering stock, site preparation, overseeing the tree planting, tending and following up with survival assessments. Interested landowners should contact their local planting agency through [www.treesontario.ca/programs/agency\\_search.php](http://www.treesontario.ca/programs/agency_search.php) or phone Trees Ontario at 1-877-646-1193.

- It’s best to plant deciduous trees in the spring, as soon as the frost is out of the ground, or in the fall, from leaf-fall until freeze-up.
- Evergreens can be planted early in the spring until four weeks after deciduous trees have opened their leaves or in the fall, from about the first week of August to the end of October.

## DIG THE TREE PLANTING IDEA?

To decide what kind of tree to plant, when and where to plant it and how to care for it, go to: <http://www.treecanada.ca/publications/guide.htm> for *A Guide to Tree Planting* from the Canadian Forest Service — Natural Resources Canada, 1992.



and goes “poking around” aquatic plants in Ontario’s ponds.

“People are often much aghast when you swim into the ‘goopy weeds,’” he says.

“With the floating leaf layer, the water is around 40°C. That’s where the frogs lie, nose sticking out of the water. They have a really good time there.

“You dive down under the weeds. It’s another world. You get down into the shade, and there are small fish, the substrate of hydra — the little animal that has little tentacles and grabs little bugs out of the water. You see all these tiny organisms living there. It’s a complex forest-like structure.”

And there is even some drama.

“Once in a while, along comes a big predator or you’ll scare up a big predator — a big pike or bass has gone in there after the minnows. Or you’ll see a turtle. Or, once in a while, it’s not always pleasant, and you’ll be face-to-face with a water snake.”

He laughs: “That’s not great. I’ve had a few close encounters. You get caught up in the weeds and you’re nose to nose with the damned thing and, of course you’ve got a mask on. They take off, but they are sort of nasty things and you’ve got to be careful. They will bite.”

His favourite tree is white pine; several giant ones grow through the deck of



Gordon Miller, Ontario’s environment commissioner, says we simply aren’t planting enough trees to leave a natural legacy for our children and grandchildren.

his cottage in Cassels, near Temagami. And his favourite animal species are pine martens and fishers: “They’re wild and exotic.” Among birds, he is partial to the raptors — eagles, hawks, merlins, peregrine falcons — and to nighthawks and whip-poor-wills.

Beyond his bachelor degree in biology and masters in plant ecology, he has worked on environmental pollution, on acid rain, on wastewater treatment (either in the private sector, the public sector or with an NGO.) And, finally, he ran his own consultancy before answering a *Globe and Mail* ad for the position of Environment Commissioner of Ontario (fittingly abbreviated as ECO.)

With a budget of approximately \$3 million and a staff of 24, he says the job is liberating. “You can express yourself, and I am able to give that freedom of expression to my staff.” Besides working with young people, the best part of the job is “the ability to deal in what we see is the truth, in objectivity and to get clear messaging out, and to make a difference.”

And he “gets it out” to the right audience. He is one of only two environment commissioners in the world who actually reports to a parliament, rather than a government. The other is in New Zealand.

Donna Jacobs is *Diplomat’s* publisher

## TREASURING TREES

God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools.

John Muir

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

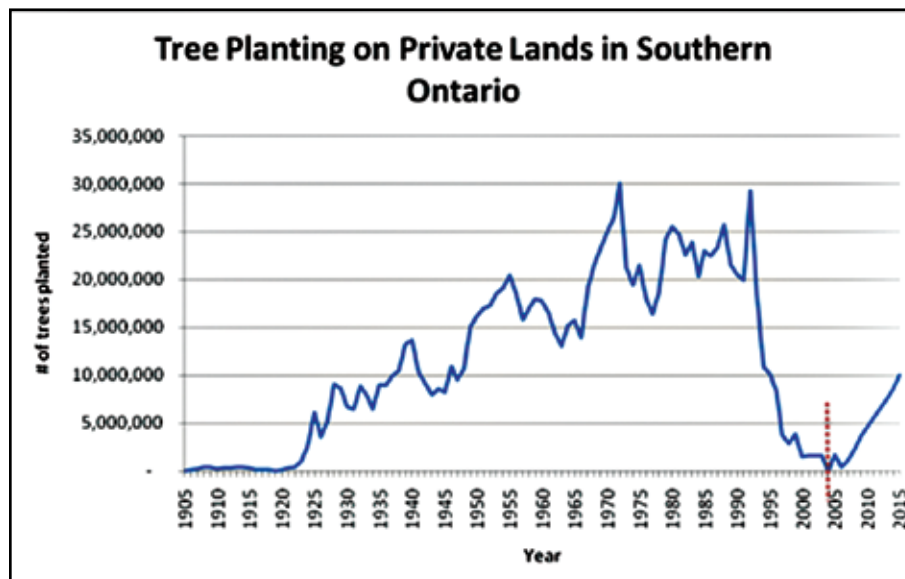
Martin Luther

If you are thinking a year ahead, sow a seed. If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree.

Chinese poet, 500 BC

Never say there is nothing beautiful in the world anymore. There is always something to make you wonder in the shape of a tree, the trembling of a leaf.

Albert Schweitzer



The precipitous decline in tree plantings occurred during the term of Ontario NDP Premier Bob Rae when the Ministry of Natural Resources was directed to systematically dismember its successful provincial tree planting system. For decades, MNR had been responsible for planting between 15 million and 30 million trees annually. The red dotted line marks the date that Trees Ontario’s launched its planting programs, with MNR and private support, whose current goal is to support the planting of 10 million trees a year by 2015.



# Danger in the Nursery

Tar sands oil development is having a significant effect on birds in Canada's boreal forest

*By Jeff Wells, Susan Casey-Lefkowitz, Gabriela Chavarria and Simon Dyer*



ISTOCK

The section of the boreal forest that sits over the tar sands region of Alberta is part of the forest fragmented by oil development.

**T**he Canadian boreal forest is one of the world's most important breeding areas for migratory birds, with 1 billion to 3 billion individual birds from at least 300 species known to regularly breed there. Approximately 30 percent of all shorebirds (7 million) and 30 percent of all landbirds (1 billion to 3 billion) that breed in the United States and Canada do so within the boreal. The section of the

boreal forest that sits over the tar sands region of Alberta is part of the forest that is rapidly being fragmented by oil development. As much as 34 to 66 percent of the Canadian boreal forest — up to 438 million acres (177 million hectares)— may no longer be intact. In Alberta, 86 percent of the boreal forest is no longer considered intact. This puts valuable bird habitat at risk.

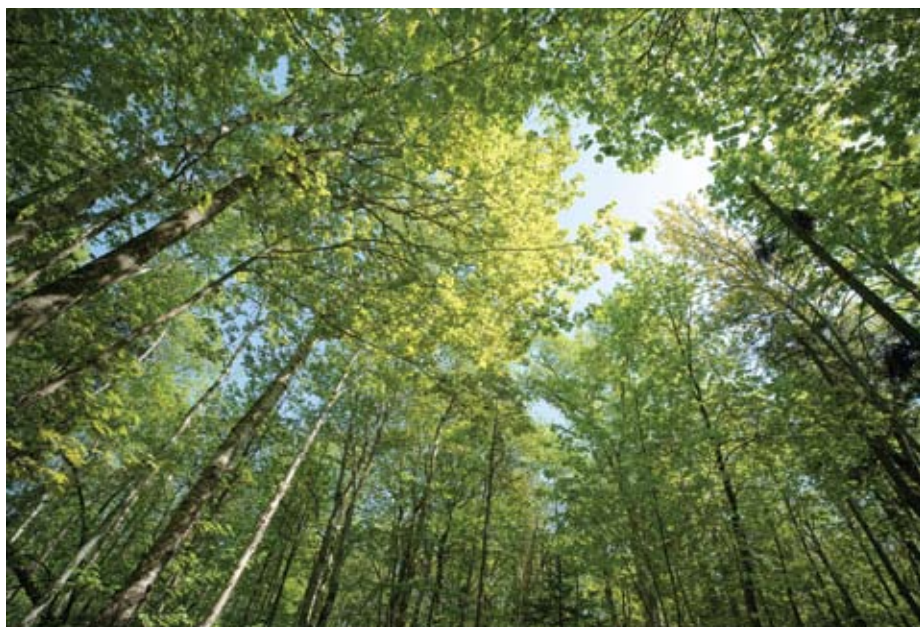
The section of the boreal forest underlain by tar sands in Alberta is critical not only as traditional breeding habitat for its 22 million to 170 million birds, but also as a globally important flyway for a great abundance and diversity of wetland-dependent birds. Unfortunately, the rapidly expanding industrial oil extraction operations in Alberta's boreal forest place these birds increasingly at risk on a massive scale.

### The boreal forest is a critical ecosystem

The tar sands deposits lie in the boreal plains ecozone, which covers 183 million acres (74 million hectares) and extends across British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Forest cover is predominantly coniferous, and black spruce, white spruce, jack pine, and tamarack are principal species. Hardwoods, particularly trembling aspen, white birch, and balsam poplar, are well represented and are often mixed with conifers. This is one of the most productive forest areas in western Canada.

Approximately 35 percent of the boreal plains is composed of wetlands, including bogs, fens, swamps, marshes, and shallow open-water ponds. Some areas of the boreal plains have 85 to 95 percent wetland ground coverage, and these areas can stretch as wide as 120,000 acres (48,500 hectares). These extensive wetland and water areas combine with complex uplands to create a diverse mosaic of bird habitats. Most of these wetlands are connected through surface and groundwater hydrology and are highly susceptible to damage from tar sands development.

Using satellite imagery, scientists documented that less than 20 percent of the 182



ISTOCK

In Alberta, 86 percent of the boreal forest is no longer considered intact, which puts valuable bird habitats at risk.

million acre (73 million hectare) boreal plains ecozone (the portion of the southern boreal extending from the eastern foothills of the Canadian Rockies to south-central Manitoba) remains in large, intact forest landscapes. Between 1990 and 2000,

one million acres (406,000 hectares) of the southern boreal of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and more than 5.9 million acres (2.4 million hectares) of the boreal of Quebec were disturbed by human-caused influences, including forestry, road-building,

### ENVIRONMENTALISTS APPLAUD CANADA AS 'WORLD LEADER'

Canada has emerged as the world leader in forest conservation. Who says so? For one, Steve Kallick, research director of the Washington-based Pew Environment Group, a highly respected global environmental organization. In a speech delivered in Edmonton earlier this year, Mr. Kallick said that Canada's vast boreal forest — 5.8 million square kilometres of trees — was "well on its way" to becoming the world's most protected forest. In an interview with *The Globe and Mail*, he declared: "It's amazing, quite extraordinary."

Mr. Kallick said that three-quarters of the boreal forest

was quite intact, making it the largest natural forest left in the world. Canadian governments, he noted, have pledged to protect two-thirds of that expanse: 3 million square kilometres. This is greater than the protected regions of the Amazon rainforest (2 million square kilometres) and far greater than Russia's taiga region.

Mr. Kallick gives much credit to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who took action in 2007 to prohibit development in huge areas in the Northwest Territories, including the South Nahanni watershed and part of Great Slave Lake — regions of great concern to environmentalists. Subsequently, Ontario pledged to protect an additional 500,000 square kilometres, Quebec another

1.1 million square kilometres.

"Mr. Harper started a snowball effect," Mr. Kallick told *The Globe and Mail*. Each of these actions then created more impetus for change."

One of these changes was the agreement signed this year by 21 forest companies and nine of Canada's leading environmental organizations which places restrictions on harvests and industrial practices in the 72 million hectares of public forests where these companies operate. The agreement promises to conserve "significant areas of Canada's boreal forest."

Canada's biggest lumber companies signed the deal — along with the David Suzuki Foundation, Pew Environment Group, Greenpeace and The Nature

Conservancy. For their part, the conservation groups will suspend "Don't Buy" campaigns.

"The scale of the conservation effort in the boreal forest is staggering," Christopher Pala, a Washington-based environmental writer, reported in an environmental journal. "The protected area is five times the size of the U.S. National Park system."

Preserving wildlife, notably migratory birds and woodland caribou, is a paramount purpose of the initiative, he said — but noted that protecting Canada's northern peat bogs and wetlands was an increasingly important factor in Canada's climate-change policy: The boreal forest stores more than 230 billion tons of carbon.



and other infrastructure development.

The region of the boreal that covers northeastern Alberta is a biologically rich area that is known to support at least 292 species of breeding birds, including most of the declining species and 65 bird species of conservation concern. While boreal forest habitat supports densities of breeding birds ranging from 0.64 to 4.86 breeding individuals per acre depending on habitat type, studies of breeding birds in northern Alberta have found some of the highest densities anywhere within the boreal, often exceeding 4.86 birds per acre.

The area is also an important migratory corridor for large numbers of ducks, geese, cranes, and shorebirds. Many of these birds use the Peace-Athabasca Delta directly to the north (and downstream) or portions of the river system near agricultural areas along the western and southern edges of the tar sands as staging areas. Surveys in the 1970s estimated up to 1.4 million waterbirds use the delta in fall migration. Limited aerial surveys of shorebirds in the Delta in 1999 found single-day counts of 11,000 and 14,000 birds. In some years, the bulk of the world's population of birds such as Ross's goose has migrated through the boreal forest. In other years, they are joined by large numbers of white-fronted geese, lesser sandhill cranes, and central flyway populations of Canada geese. Aerial surveys of the Peace-Athabasca Delta in late June and July 1998-2001 found as many as 400,000 molting ducks, coot, and geese. In August and September in those same years, numbers peaked at 800,000 individuals.

**The boreal forest supports large numbers of songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl**

The boreal supports more than 25 percent of the global populations of 149 bird species and the bulk of some of North America's most abundant bird species. An estimated 38 percent (26 million) of all of the waterfowl of Canada and the United States breed in the boreal. More than 208 million dark-eyed juncos, 116 million white-throated sparrows, 96 million yellow-rumped warblers, 102 million American robins, and 73 million Swainson's thrushes are among the abundant birds that rely on the Canadian boreal for breeding every year.

Virtually all species of boreal nesting birds also make use of parts of the boreal during migration. Some birds rely more on the boreal for migratory stop-over habitat than for breeding or wintering. For example, the white-rumped sandpiper



Approximately 35 percent of the boreal plains is composed of wetlands, including bogs, fens, swamps, marshes, and shallow open-water ponds.



Canada's boreal forests are crucial habitat for some of the world's largest remaining populations of timber (grey) wolves, grizzly bears and woodland caribou.

does not breed in the boreal but makes extensive use of boreal wetlands during fall and spring migration. Other shorebirds such as the pectoral sandpiper that have insignificant portions of their breeding range in the boreal, are also highly reliant on boreal wetlands during migration. Many waterfowl species also regularly migrate through a large part of the boreal.

Within the tar sands, surveys at or over tailings ponds and small natural lakes have regularly documented tens of thou-

sands of waterbird migrants. For example, a spring 2003 survey documented more than 16,000 birds, largely geese, ducks, and shorebirds; however, radar suggested that at least four times that many (64,000) may have actually passed over, as many birds may go visually undetected, especially at night. At Gordon Lake, south of Fort McMurray, one-day counts as high as 5,600 have been documented during the spring, and estimates during fall migration of up to 100,000 ducks have been reported. Kearl





The boreal's bay-breasted warbler



Canada warbler



Olive-sided warbler

JEFF NADLER

Lake has had single-day spring counts as high as 2,700 birds, and of more than 1,000 birds at McClelland Lake. A study in 1972-73 in Syncrude's tar sands lease area found over 1,000 waterbirds present each day during spring and fall migration. The same study documented 1,500 ducks using a section of the Athabasca River on a single day during spring migration. A 1984 study, also on the Syncrude lease, reported more than 18,000 geese observed passing over during fall migration.

Similarly, at Utikuma Lake on the southwest edge of the tar sands, aerial surveys documented over 100,000 waterbirds of 29 species using the lake including up to 20,000 gulls, 8,000 canvasbacks, 5,000 lesser scaup, 4,900 bufflehead, 4,500 western grebes, and 4,000 mallards. The Peace-Athabasca Delta has also been estimated to support as many as 130,000 breeding waterfowl — birds that must pass over or near the tar sands during migration. Among these breeding birds have been as many as 20,000 mallards, over 15,000 lesser scaup, nearly 10,000 canvasbacks, 7,000 common goldeneye, and 5,000 bufflehead.

Approximately 94 percent of individual birds migrate out of the boreal after breeding, heading to other countries in the Western hemisphere, or even outside the hemisphere. More species winter in the United States (the lower 48 states) than in any other country or region — a total of 204 species, or approximately 63 percent of boreal breeding birds.

#### **Tar sands development puts some of the world's most at-risk birds in danger**

Recent global assessments have shown that an ever-increasing number of bird species are at risk. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list

of threatened species now includes more than 10 percent of the world's birds in some conservation concern category, and BirdLife International has documented a doubling of the extinction rate of birds in the last century. In North America alone, more than 400 bird species are listed as being of conservation concern on one or

### **WITHIN THE TAR SANDS, SURVEYS AT OR OVER TAILINGS PONDS AND SMALL NATURAL LAKES HAVE REGULARLY DOCUMENTED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WATERBIRD MIGRANTS.**

more conservation lists, and there are more than 70 North American species on the IUCN Red List.

Some of North America's most rapidly declining birds are among those most reliant on the boreal. Waterfowl like greater and lesser scaup have declined by about 150,000 birds a year since the late 1970s, and the three scoter species have dropped by more than 50 percent since the 1950s. Another wetland bird species, the horned grebe, has declined by 60 percent since the late 1960s.

Two of the species showing the most severe documented declines are species that are highly reliant on the boreal forest — the lesser yellowlegs and the rusty

blackbird. Both have seen drops of more than 90 percent over the last 40 years. Other species have had less severe but still steep declines, including the olive-sided flycatcher (70 percent decline), Canada warbler (80 percent decline), bay-breasted warbler (70 percent decline), evening grosbeak (70 percent decline), white-throated sparrow (30 percent decline), and the short-billed dowitcher (50 percent decline in some populations).

Many of the shorebird species that have been documented migrating through the boreal forest where tar sands are being developed are birds of conservation concern that have shown significant declines and/or have relatively small populations that place them at higher risk. Shorebird species that have been documented in the region include black-bellied plover and American golden-plover, lesser yellowlegs, sanderling, semipalmated sandpiper, white-rumped sandpiper, pectoral sandpiper, stilt sandpiper, and red-necked phalarope.

The only wild, migratory population of the highly endangered whooping crane nests solely in and near northeastern Wood Buffalo National Park to the north of today's open-pit mines. Birds from this population migrate over the boreal tar sands region and occasionally stop over at wetland locations.

Jeff Wells, PhD, is with the Boreal Songbird Initiative. He was the lead author and co-authored this report with Susan Casey-Lefkowitz, Natural Resources Defense Council, Gabriela Chavarria, PhD, Natural Resources Defense Council and Simon Dyer, Pembina Institute. Visit [www.nrdc.org/wildlife/borealbirds.pdf](http://www.nrdc.org/wildlife/borealbirds.pdf) for the complete, cited report.

# The all-important boreal Forest

**T**he number of birds breeding in North America's boreal forest region is estimated at between 1.65 and 3 billion. Of these, landbirds are by far the most numerous, making up 97 percent of all birds breeding there. The importance of the boreal forest region as a breeding ground for many bird groups is staggering. Estimates put the total populations that use this region for breeding at 38 percent (26 million) of all waterfowl of Canada and the U.S., 30 percent of all shorebirds (7 million) and 30 percent of all landbirds (1-3 billion).

A total of 276 species have five percent or more of their breeding range within the boreal forest region. Of these, at least 96 species representing 14 percent of the total Canada/U.S. birds have 50 percent



GLEN TEPKE

The hooded merganser is one of 96 species with 50 percent or more of estimated Western hemisphere breeding population in North America's boreal forest.

or more of their estimated total breeding population in the region. Another 55 species have 25 to 49 percent of their breeding population within the region.

*Source: The Boreal Forest Region: North America's Bird Nursery by Peter Blancher of Bird Studies Canada and Jeffrey Wells of the Boreal Songbird Initiative*

## Species with 50 percent or more of estimated Western Hemisphere breeding population in North America's Boreal Forest (96 species)

Trumpeter Swan	Sora	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Black-throated Green Warbler
American Wigeon	Whooping Crane	American Three-toed Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler
American Black Duck	Semipalmated Plover	Black-backed Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Greater Yellowlegs	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Lesser Yellowlegs	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler
Greater Scaup	Solitary Sandpiper	Alder Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Wandering Tattler	Least Flycatcher	Northern Waterthrush
Surf Scoter	Spotted Sandpiper	Northern Shrike	Connecticut Warbler
White-winged Scoter	Whimbrel	Blue-headed Vireo	Mourning Warbler
Black Scoter	Hudsonian Godwit	Philadelphia Vireo	Wilson's Warbler
Bufflehead	Surfbird	Gray Jay	Canada Warbler
Common Goldeneye	Least Sandpiper	Boreal Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Barrow's Goldeneye	Short-billed Dowitcher	Gray-headed Chickadee	Le Conte's Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Wilson's Snipe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Fox Sparrow
Common Merganser	Red-necked Phalarope	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Little Gull	Swainson's Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Spruce Grouse	Bonaparte's Gull	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
White-tailed Ptarmigan	Mew Gull	Bohemian Waxwing	White-crowned Sparrow
Pacific Loon	Herring Gull	Tennessee Warbler	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Common Loon	Common Tern	Orange-crowned Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Horned Grebe	Arctic Tern	Nashville Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Red-necked Grebe	Northern Hawk Owl	Magnolia Warbler	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Merlin	Great Gray Owl	Cape May Warbler	Pine Grosbeak
Yellow Rail	Boreal Owl	Yellow-rumped Warbler	White-winged Crossbill



# The oil sands: 'The risks will endure'

It is unclear if technology can provide a solution

By World Wildlife Fund-Canada



ISTOCK

© WWF-CANADA / TONY MAAS

The oil sands and Athabasca River in Alberta as seen through an airplane window's glare. The Athabasca River flows past a tailings pond.

**F**or more than 40 years, the Alberta oil sands mining industry has produced bitumen — a mixture of heavy hydrocarbons that can be upgraded and refined into petroleum products. With each barrel of product, the industry also produces more than 1.5 barrels of a persistent waste with the consistency of yogurt. Mature Fine Tailings (MFT), as the waste is known, is produced when the

fine particles in the tailings settle for two to three years. MFT may persist without significant further consolidation for centuries. It is too toxic to be released to the aquatic environment and too fluid to serve as a substrate for dry land reclamation.

The mining industry has explored a variety of ways to treat MFT, but very little of the waste stream is actually treated. More the 840 million cubic meters of MFT has

accumulated to date and the inventory is steadily climbing, with an estimated 66 and 72 million cubic meters added from 2008 and 2009 bitumen production respectively.

The growing inventory of MFT poses risks to the environment, an expense to industry, an impediment to efficient resource recovery for the regulator and a growing unsecured financial liability. The industry's present practice of producing

ever-increasing quantities of MFT and stockpiling it is not sustainable.

The oil sands industry has long promised that technological innovation would produce a solution; however, the primary technology used over the past 15 years has proven ineffective in curbing the continued growth of MFT. Mine operators are now scrambling to implement new yet unproven tailings technologies.

Meanwhile, the industry hopes to eventually dispose of the majority of its inventory of MFT in so-called End Pit Lakes, that is, repositories for waste covered in fresh water. This is an unproven – some would say dubious – plan.

The expanding scope of the problem attests that there has been ineffective regulation to limit or reduce the tailings liability. Alberta regulators continue to grant concessions to the industry that are at odds with achieving effective tailings reclamation results. The requirements of a fledgling tailings regulation introduced in 2009 are not being enforced. This must change.

Given the scale of the current tailings liability, it is unclear at this point if new technology can eventually provide a solution. The industry has failed over four decades of mining to address the problem. Significant investments have been made in research and development yet the tailings inventory continues to grow.

The only true measure of progress in tailings reclamation is whether current tailings inventories are increasing or declining. Strong measures to stop the continued growth of MFT must be enacted if we are to avoid passing the accrued liability to future generations to remedy. One way to bring the problem under control would be to make the continued mining of bitumen conditional upon successful tailings reclamation performance.

Canadians weighed in on both sides of [this] issue in April, 2008, when 1,600 ducks perished in Syncrude's Aurora North tailings lake. The federal and Alberta governments responded with charges under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) and the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. The court found Syncrude guilty and convicted the company on both charges [and fined it \$3 million].

The Syncrude incident was serious and regrettable but it would be far more devastating if any of North America's largest migratory bird, the endangered whooping crane, were to alight on a tailings pond.

Such a scenario is not outside the realm of possibility. Twice every year, the 260 birds or so that comprise the last remaining wild population of whooping cranes in the world fly near oil sands tailings lakes as they migrate between wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas and nesting habitat in Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. An unfortunate stop in a tailings lake could negate the efforts to conserve the species that have been underway since the whooping crane was declared endangered

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BETWEEN WINTERING  
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NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
REFUGE IN TEXAS  
AND NESTING HABITAT  
IN CANADA'S  
WOOD BUFFALO  
NATIONAL PARK.

in 1967. Any convictions under the MBCA that might result would fail to compensate for the loss.

If a Syncrude tailings lake can destroy 1,600 migratory birds in one day, it or another of the 17 other tailings lakes scattered over the landscape in northern Alberta could do so again. In fact as this report was being finalized, there were reports that more migratory waterfowl have landed and perished in oil sands tailing lakes. [Editor's note: At the end of October, 350 ducks died after landing in a tailings lake.]

The risk of bird mortality will exist as long as tailings lakes exist. This risk will extend into the future with potentially toxic end-pit lakes — by design, far more enticing to migratory birds than barren tailings lakes — situated near the flyway.

The United Nations has designated 2011 International Year of Forests and in the most recent of the forest assessments it has conducted every five years since 1946, it reports that the rate of deforestation shows signs of decreasing, but is still “alarmingly high.”

Even former industry representatives recognize that tailings remediation performance has been inadequate. In a recent *Edmonton Journal* news article, retired Shell Canada CEO Clive Mather said it is time the industry provided a clear plan and a timeline to eliminate tailings ponds. Mr. Mather maintains there is no reason for tailings ponds to exist any longer and that the industry has the tools available to clean up tailings. All it needs is the direction to do so.

Bruce Friesen, former land and environment manager for Syncrude, also spoke to the issue in an interview just prior to his retirement in 2007 when he said: “Land reclamation is serious business involving serious money. It's not trivial — it is vital to the industry. We know that we can reclaim the mine sites we are developing. If we don't know how to do that, then we have no right to disturb the land.” Many Canadians would agree with Mr. Friesen.

The oil sands industry has created a monumental environmental liability in Northern Alberta by allowing the volume of MFT to continuously grow over four decades of mining. Efforts by the Alberta government to hold the industry responsible for mitigating its waste have failed to achieve the necessary results. There are, however, steps that both industry and government can take to remedy the situation.

If the companies operating in Alberta's oil sands are unable or unwilling to responsibly reclaim their mine tailings, the companies should forfeit both the social and the regulatory licenses they need to continue operating.

In October, WWF Canada published a major study (“Tailings: A Lasting Oil Sands Legacy”) on the environmental consequences of Alberta's oil sands tailings ponds. This article is an excerpt from this report.



# Things are looking up – a bit

The UN assesses the health of world's forests

**T**he UN General Assembly has designated 2011 as International Year of Forests. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), based in Rome, has conducted an assessment of the world's forest resources every five years since 1946. Its most recent assessment, published in October, covers forests — or lack of forests — in 233 countries. Here, in a series of edited excerpts, *Diplomat* reports some of the significant conclusions of FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment.

Forests cover 31 percent of total land area (one hectare = 2.47 acres). The world's total forest area in 2010 is estimated to be just over 4 billion hectares, corresponding to an average of 0.6 hectares of forest per capita. However, the area of forest is unevenly distributed. The five most forest-rich countries (Russia, Brazil, Canada, the United States and China) account for more than half of the total forest area (53 percent), while 64 countries with a combined population of 2 billion people have forest on no more than 10 percent of their land area. These include a number of fairly large countries in arid zones, as well as many small island developing states (SIDS) and dependent territories. Ten of these have no forests at all.

The total area of other wooded land is estimated to be at least 1.1 billion hectares, equivalent to 9 percent of the total land area. The total area of other land with tree cover was reported to be 79 million hectares, but is undoubtedly much higher as information availability was limited. The rate of deforestation shows signs of decreasing, but is still alarmingly high.

Around 13 million hectares of forest were converted to other uses — largely agriculture — or lost through natural causes each year in the last decade. This compares with a revised figure of 16 million hectares per year in the 1990s. Both Brazil and Indonesia, which had the highest net loss of forest in the 1990s, have significantly reduced their rate of loss, while in Australia, severe drought and forest fires have exacerbated the loss of forest since 2000.

Afforestation and natural expansion of forests in some countries have significantly reduced the net loss of forest area.



This Amazon parrot, perched in the rainforest, belongs to a species that lives in forests and woodlands, usually near major rivers in Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Guyana.

The net change in forest area in the period 2000-2010 is estimated at -5.2 million hectares per year at the global level (an area about the size of Costa Rica). This is down from -8.3 million hectares per year in the period 1990-2000. This substantial reduction is due to both a decrease in the deforestation rate and an increase in the area of new forest established through planting or seeding and the natural expansion of existing forests.

More than 90 percent of forest area con-

sists of naturally regenerated forests.

Primary forests — forests of native species in which there are no clearly visible signs of past or present human activity — are estimated to occupy 36 percent of the total forest area. Other naturally regenerated forests make up some 57 percent, while planted forests account for an estimated 7 percent, of the total forest area.

The area of mangroves continues to decline, while the area of bamboo and rubber plantations is increasing.

The total area of mangroves is estimated at 15.6 million hectares as of 2010, down from 16.1 million hectares in 1990. Nearly half the total mangrove area (47 percent) is found in five countries: Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, Australia and Mexico. The area of bamboo is difficult to assess, as these species often occur as patches within forests or as clusters outside them. Nevertheless, preliminary findings based on information from 33 of the main bamboo-rich countries indicate that the total area is about 31.5 million hectares. Rubber plantations are found in relatively few countries — primarily in Southeast Asia and Africa — and cover an estimated 10 million hectares. While the area of rubber increased rapidly in the 1990s, the rate of increase is now beginning to slow down and is currently decreasing in several countries.

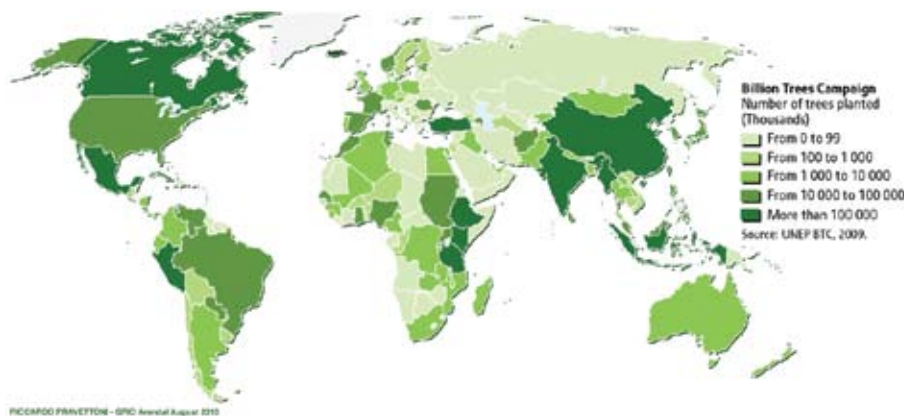
Forests contain more carbon than the entire atmosphere.

The world's forests store more than 650 billion tonnes of carbon, 44 percent in the biomass, 11 percent in dead wood and litter, and 45 percent in the soil. While

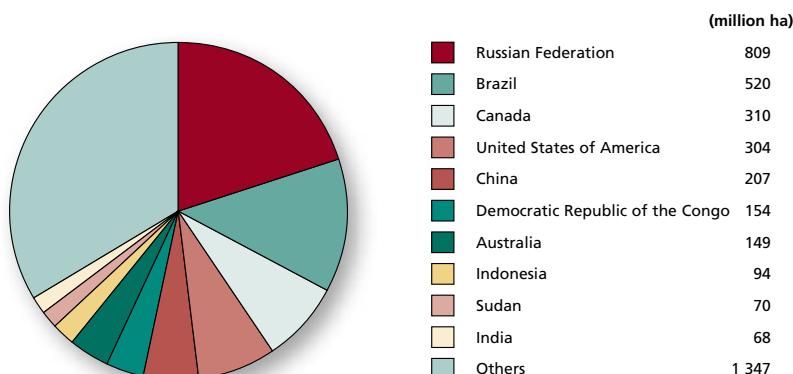
sustainable management, planting and rehabilitation of forests can conserve or increase forest carbon stocks, deforestation, degradation and poor forest management reduce them. For the world as a whole, carbon stocks in forest biomass decreased by an estimated 0.5 billion tonnes annually during the period 2005–2010. This was mainly because of a reduction in the global forest area and occurred despite an increase in growing stock per hectare in some regions.

#### Key conclusions:

Considerable progress has been made towards reversing the overall trend of forest area loss, and several variables related to the extent of forest resources show no significant negative trends — and even a positive trend over time in some countries and regions. Yet deforestation, including uncontrolled conversion of forests to agricultural land, continues at an alarmingly high rate in many countries. Considerable efforts are needed to ensure the overall trend in extent of forest resources is positive or stable in all regions.



Ten countries with the largest forest area, 2010



#### TREES TRUTHS

One healthy, mature tree inhales 12 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> and exhales enough oxygen to support a family of four for a year.

One hectare of trees can adsorb 6 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

80 mature trees can remove from the air the four tonnes of yearly emissions that a mid-sized car produces.

Trees replenish our oxygen. They filter out air pollution (including such nasty things as carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter — PM10 and PM2.5 — and sulfur dioxide) known to cause health concerns in humans, including headaches, lung, throat and eye irritation, respiratory and heart disease, and cancer. Trees contribute to better mental health and wellbeing.

Trees help to conserve soil and water, control avalanches, prevent desertification, protect coastal areas and stabilize sand dunes.

Forests are the most important repositories of terrestrial biological biodiversity, housing up to 90 percent of known terrestrial species.

Trees and shrubs provide timber, fuel wood, food, fodder, essential oils, gums, resins and latex, medicines and shade. Forest animals have a vital role in forest ecology such as pollination, seed dispersal and germination.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and are vital carbon sinks. It is estimated that the world's forests store 283 Gigatonnes of carbon in their biomass alone, and that carbon stored in forest biomass, deadwood, litter and soil together is roughly 50 per cent more than the carbon in the atmosphere.

*Sources: Poverty and the Environment, Green Belt Movement, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The World Agroforestry Centre, Worldwatch Institute*



# Transparency International's global report on corruption

**T**ransparency International, based in Berlin, publishes a global index each year that measures government corruption. Here, along with its 2010 index, the organization warns that the economic crises of the moment have put even wealthy governments in danger of increased corruption.

With governments committing huge sums to tackle the world's most pressing problems, from the instability of financial markets to climate change and poverty, corruption remains an obstacle to achieving much needed progress.

The 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index shows that nearly three-quarters of the 178 countries in the index score below five, on a scale from 10 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). These results indicate a serious corruption problem.

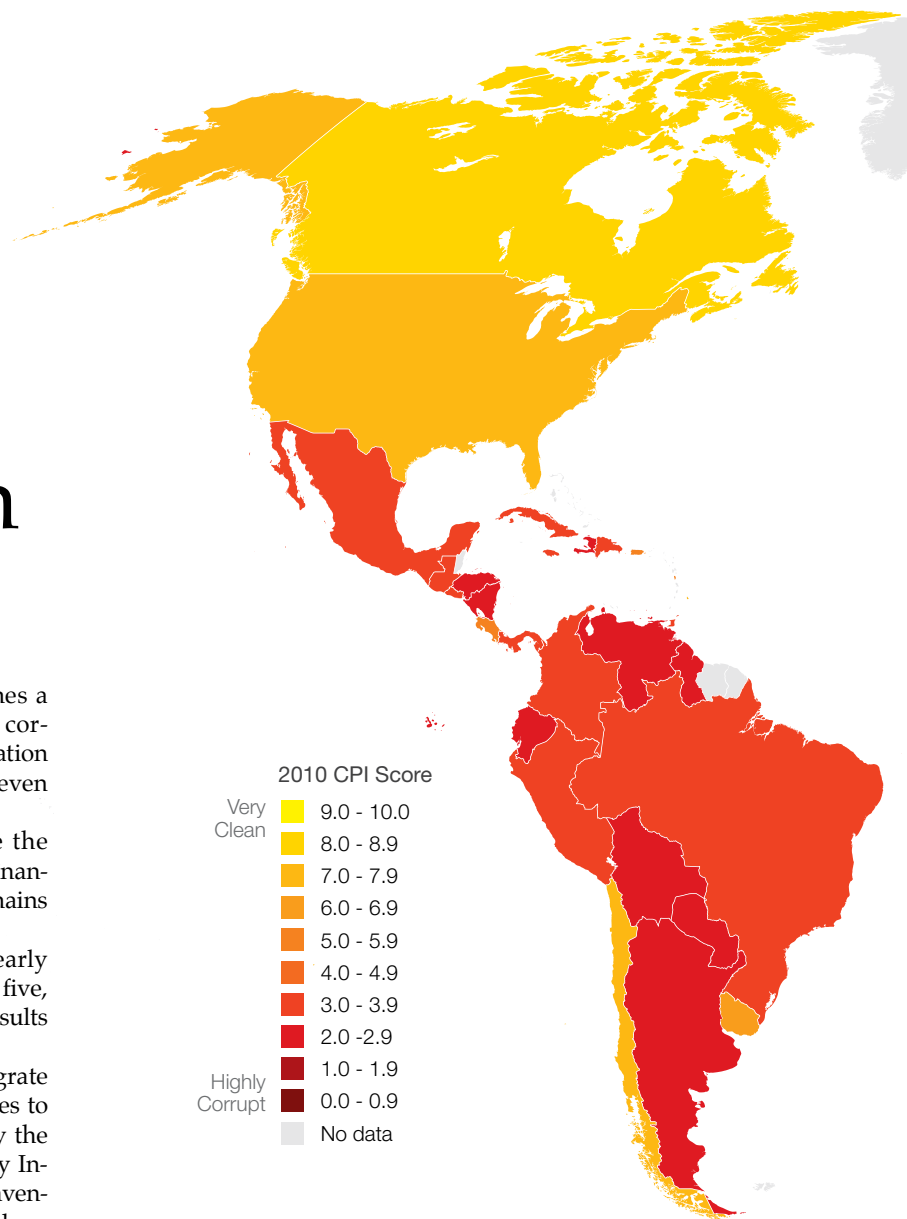
To address these challenges, governments need to integrate anti-corruption measures in all spheres, from their responses to the financial crisis and climate change to commitments by the international community to eradicate poverty. Transparency International advocates stricter implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, the only global initiative that provides a framework for putting an end to corruption.

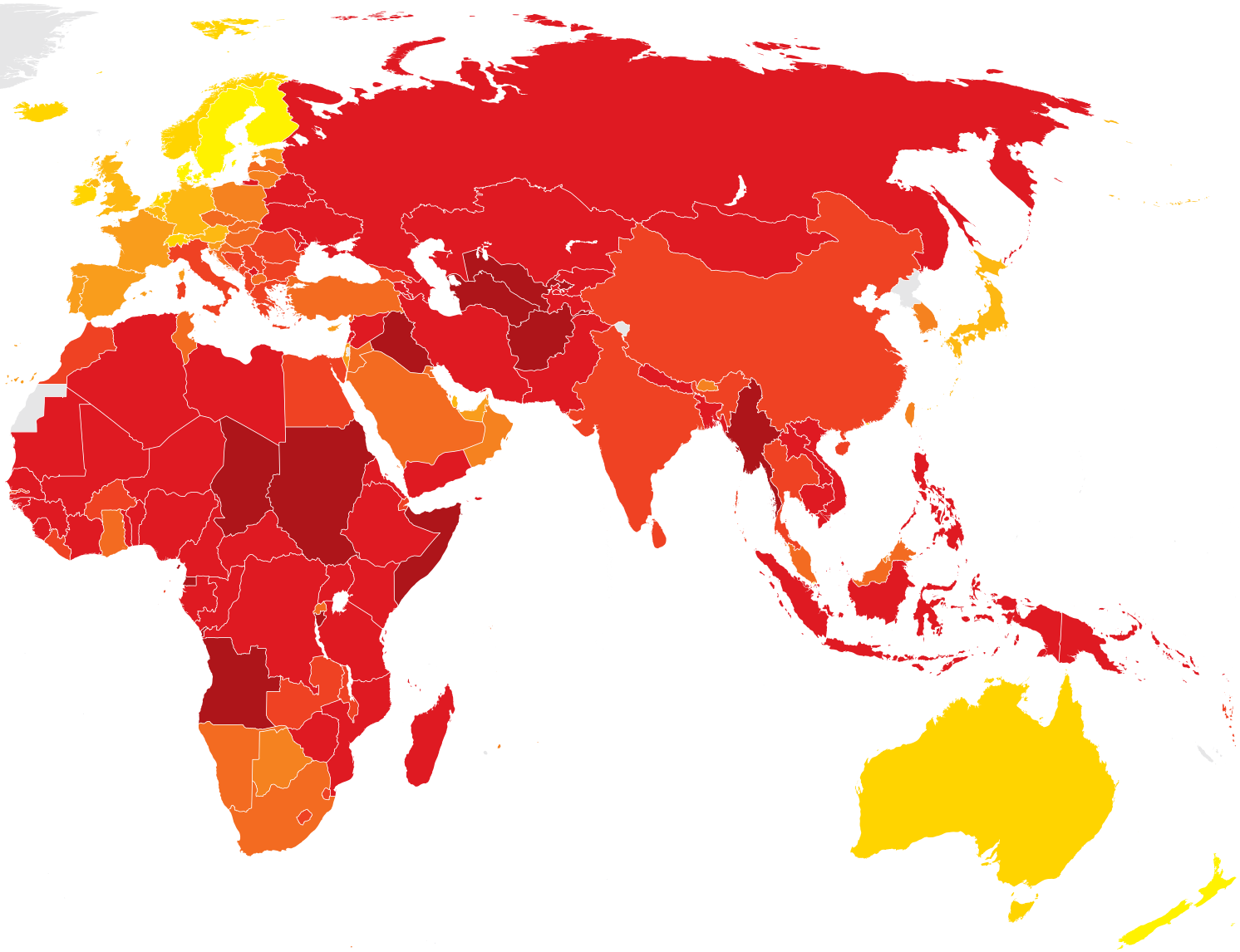
Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore are tied at the top of the list with a score of 9.3, followed closely by Finland and Sweden at 9.2. At the bottom is Somalia with a score of 1.1, slightly trailing Myanmar and Afghanistan at 1.4 and Iraq at 1.5.

Notable among decliners over the past year are some of the countries most affected by a financial crisis precipitated by transparency and integrity deficits. Among those improving in the past year, the general absence of OECD states underlines the fact that all nations need to bolster their good governance mechanisms.

The message is clear: Across the globe, transparency and accountability are critical to restoring trust and turning back the tide of corruption. Without them, global policy solutions to many global crises are at risk.

— Transparency International





COUNTRY/ RANK TERRITORY			SCORE			COUNTRY/ RANK TERRITORY			SCORE			COUNTRY/ RANK TERRITORY			SCORE		
1	Denmark	9.3	30	Spain	6.1	59	Tunisia	4.3	91	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.2	116	Mozambique	2.7	146	Libya	2.2
1	New Zealand	9.3	32	Portugal	6.0	62	Croatia	4.1				116	Tanzania	2.7	146	Nepal	2.2
1	Singapore	9.3	33	Botswana	5.8	62	FYR Macedonia	4.1	91	Djibouti	3.2	116	Vietnam	2.7	146	Paraguay	2.2
4	Finland	9.2	33	Puerto Rico	5.8	62	Ghana	4.1	91	Gambia	3.2	123	Armenia	2.6	146	Yemen	2.2
4	Sweden	9.2	33	Taiwan	5.8	62	Samoa	4.1	91	Guatemala	3.2	123	Eritrea	2.6	154	Cambodia	2.1
6	Canada	8.9	36	Bhutan	5.7	66	Rwanda	4.0	91	Kiribati	3.2	123	Madagascar	2.6	154	Central African Republic	2.1
7	Netherlands	8.8	37	Malta	5.6	67	Italy	3.9	91	Sri Lanka	3.2	123	Niger	2.6			
8	Australia	8.7	38	Brunei	5.5	68	Georgia	3.8	91	Swaziland	3.2	127	Belarus	2.5	154	Comoros	2.1
8	Switzerland	8.7	39	Korea (South)	5.4	69	Brazil	3.7	98	Burkina Faso	3.1	127	Ecuador	2.5	154	Congo-Brazzaville	2.1
10	Norway	8.6	39	Mauritius	5.4	69	Cuba	3.7	98	Egypt	3.1	127	Lebanon	2.5	154	Guinea-Bissau	2.1
11	Iceland	8.5	41	Costa Rica	5.3	69	Montenegro	3.7	98	Mexico	3.1	127	Nicaragua	2.5	154	Kenya	2.1
11	Luxembourg	8.5	41	Oman	5.3	69	Romania	3.7	101	Dominican Republic	3.0	127	Syria	2.5	154	Laos	2.1
13	Hong Kong	8.4	41	Poland	5.3	73	Bulgaria	3.6	101	Sao Tome & Principe	3.0	127	Timor-Leste	2.5	154	Papua New Guinea	2.1
14	Ireland	8.0	44	Dominica	5.2	73	El Salvador	3.6	101	Tonga	3.0	127	Uganda	2.5	154	Russia	2.1
15	Austria	7.9	45	Cape Verde	5.1	73	Panama	3.6	101	Zambia	3.0	134	Azerbaijan	2.4	154	Tajikistan	2.1
15	Germany	7.9	46	Lithuania	5.0	73	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	105	Algeria	2.9	134	Bangladesh	2.4	164	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2.0
17	Barbados	7.8	46	Macau	5.0	73	Vanuatu	3.6	105	Argentina	2.9	134	Honduras	2.4	164	Guinea	2.0
17	Japan	7.8	48	Bahrain	4.9	78	China	3.5	105	Kazakhstan	2.9	134	Nigeria	2.4	164	Kyrgyzstan	2.0
19	Qatar	7.7	49	Seychelles	4.8	78	Colombia	3.5	105	Moldova	2.9	134	Philippines	2.4	164	Venezuela	2.0
20	United Kingdom	7.6	50	Hungary	4.7	78	Greece	3.5	105	Senegal	2.9	134	Sierra Leone	2.4	168	Angola	1.9
21	Chile	7.2	50	Jordan	4.7	78	Lesotho	3.5	110	Benin	2.8	134	Togo	2.4	168	Equatorial Guinea	1.9
22	Belgium	7.1	50	Saudi Arabia	4.7	78	Peru	3.5	110	Bolivia	2.8	134	Ukraine	2.4	170	Burundi	1.8
22	United States	7.1	53	Czech Republic	4.6	78	Serbia	3.5	110	Gabon	2.8	134	Zimbabwe	2.4	171	Chad	1.7
24	Uruguay	6.9	54	Kuwait	4.5	78	Thailand	3.5	110	Indonesia	2.8	143	Maldives	2.3	172	Sudan	1.6
25	France	6.8	54	South Africa	4.5	85	Malawi	3.4	110	Kosovo	2.8	143	Mauritania	2.3	172	Turkmenistan	1.6
26	Estonia	6.5	56	Malaysia	4.4	85	Morocco	3.4	110	Solomon Islands	2.8	143	Pakistan	2.3	172	Uzbekistan	1.6
27	Slovenia	6.4	56	Namibia	4.4	87	Albania	3.3	116	Ethiopia	2.7	146	Cameroon	2.2	175	Iraq	1.5
28	Cyprus	6.3	56	Turkey	4.4	87	India	3.3	116	Guyana	2.7	146	Côte d'Ivoire	2.2	176	Afghanistan	1.4
28	United Arab Emirates	6.3	59	Latvia	4.3	87	Jamaica	3.3	116	Mali	2.7	146	Haiti	2.2	176	Myanmar	1.4
30	Israel	6.1	59	Slovakia	4.3	87	Liberia	3.3	116	Mongolia	2.7	146	Iran	2.2	178	Somalia	1.1



# Lessons in leadership

By James Hunter



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Writer James Hunter argues that those who engage in leadership training through inspirational lectures and off-site retreats would be well-advised to drop those activities and, instead, read the biographies of great leaders — such as Winston Churchill.

**L**arge organizations are interested in identifying men and women with leadership abilities. They spend a lot of time and money hiring outside experts to deliver leadership training. Such training can range from one-hour inspirational sessions to off-site retreats lasting several days. The presiding leadership guru may have written a book, which is distributed to one and all. There will invariably be a PowerPoint presentation supported by a binder with tabs; and, commonly, a laminated card summarizing the “10 secrets of an effective leader.”

Middle- or senior-level executives at global firms are familiar with all this, but here’s the interesting thing: Ask them what they remember from this training and you will probably be met with blank stares. In fact, they don’t remember much. They are apt to say that they picked up what they know about leadership from

on-the-job experience.

Does this mean that there is no place for theory when it comes to leadership? No. Check out the shelves of most bookstores and you will find an extensive range of books on management and leadership. However, if you buy one of these books, you may discover that you have been looking for leadership inspiration in the wrong place. Why not try the biography section? A well-written life story is much more likely to grip your attention than any how-to leadership books.

Let’s take the example of someone about whom many books have been written and who is generally recognized as a leader: Winston Churchill. Obviously one could write a book on the topic of Churchill and leadership (and doubtless many already have). Anyone who reads a decent biography of Churchill will find it hard not to remember some of the an-

ecdotes relating to the great man’s leadership qualities.

Churchill did not make his living as a leader. He made it as a journalist — winning the Nobel Prize for literature, not for peace. But he, far more than most, exemplifies the dos and don’ts of authentic leadership.

Herewith, some lessons from his life.

**Have confidence in your own leadership abilities:** As a young man, Churchill told a dinner companion, “We are all worms but I do believe I am a very glowworm.” Later in life, Churchill upbraided one of his domestic servants for rudeness. The man responded that Churchill had been rude to him. “Ah yes,” said Churchill, “but I am a great man.”

**Knowledge is power:** Churchill encouraged (as we say in today’s parlance) upstream communication. When he was out of

power in the 1930s, he listened to whistle-blowers — young men who had access to confidential information about Germany's growing might and who risked all to provide Churchill with confidential briefings using classified information. Churchill then used this information to embarrass government spokesmen in the House of Commons as he carried on his one-man fight warning the world about the Nazi threat.

**Avoid making empty threats:** Advantage seldom comes of it. This was a lesson Churchill learned from his brilliant but unstable father, Lord Randolph Churchill. Lord Randolph was a rising star in the government of Lord Salisbury. The two men had a falling-out and Lord Randolph submitted his resignation, confident in the expectation that Salisbury would beg him to reconsider. Salisbury did no such thing. Sick of the posturing, he accepted Lord Randolph's resignation — and ended his political career.

**Be patient in achieving your goals:** From an early age, Churchill wanted to be prime minister. He did not achieve this goal until 1940, when he was 65 years old — official retirement age. He overcame adversity that would have felled lesser men. Churchill's example must surely give comfort to all of us of a certain age who feel we have not yet achieved our goals.

**Be flexible:** Churchill started his political career as a Conservative. He crossed the floor of the House of Commons to become a Liberal. He then crossed the floor yet again to return to the Conservatives. "Anyone can rat," Churchill said, "but it takes a certain amount of ingenuity to re-rat."

**When you want something, lobby for it:** As a young man, Churchill had no compunction about using his mother to pull strings in high places to get him where he wanted and what he wanted. His mother, the beautiful Jennie Churchill, was an American socialite with excellent connections. At Churchill's urging, she used her connections to get postings for Winston as a war correspondent on the front lines of late-Victorian conflicts — the last cavalry charge in the history of the British Empire at the Battle of Omdurman in North Africa, the Boer War in South Africa and the Spanish-American war in Cuba.

**Do not be discouraged by adversity:** Churchill got off to a shaky start. His parents were remote and unloving. He did not do well at his boarding school, Harrow. He was not very successful when he went on to the English military college, Sandhurst. Lord Randolph



Winston Churchill, seen above on a lecture tour of the U.S. in 1900 at age 26, is widely seen as one of the great wartime leaders but he reached his long-time goal of becoming British prime minister only at the age of 65, when most people retire. He's seen at bottom waving from Whitehall in 1945, after announcing the war against Germany had been won.

was furious when Winston did not get high enough marks at Sandhurst to qualify him for an infantry regiment. Winston had to sign up for a much more expensive cavalry regiment. His ambition was in no way dented by his inauspicious start in life.

**Avoid worldly pleasures:** The record is not so clear here. On the one hand, Churchill was not a womanizer. He remained devoted to his wife, Clementine, for his entire life. On the other hand, he smoked and drank a lot. However, later in life, his trademark cigar was not lit for much of the time and, while he continued to knock back prodigious amounts of champagne and cognac until the day he died at the age of 90, he was never seen drunk. Churchill was an expert at pacing his intake of booze: "I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me."

**Work, work, work:** Churchill worked like a Trojan. He had no choice. He enjoyed a lifestyle of the rich and famous but he inherited nothing and had to finance this lifestyle from his own writing. He employed a staff of researchers and a squad of secretaries who had to be at his beck and call day and night. He would dictate work after dinner, and into the early hours of the morning, and he would dictate work early in the day as he took his breakfast in bed.

**Read biographies of great men:** Although Churchill was an indifferent scholar at school, he prescribed for himself, as a young man, an extensive course of reading in classical and modern history. One of his favourites was the monumental *Plutarch's Lives*. He read Macaulay's *History of England*, which was essentially a history of the deeds of great men and women. His favourite lines of poetry were from Macaulay's famous poem on leadership, *Horatius at the Bridge*:

Then out spake brave Horatius  
The Captain of the Gate  
'To every man upon this earth  
Death cometh soon or late.  
And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of his fathers,  
And the temples of his gods?'

Is not this sort of thing more helpful and memorable for aspirant leaders than what may be gleaned from leadership seminars or from reading contemporary leadership manuals?

James Hunter is a Toronto-based writer.



# The Journey Of Pearl S. Buck

By George Fetherling

In 1938, Pearl S. Buck, the author of *The Good Earth*, became the first American woman to win the Nobel Prize in literature. This simple statement, however, obscures what's probably a more important one in terms of explaining her career. If you agree that T.S. Eliot, though born in the United States, was actually British, as his passport and domicile affirmed, then you can say that Buck was the first American writer of either gender to win the award without being an alcoholic. The distinction still held true at the time of her death in 1973 (and for three years after that, until Saul Bellow won the medal).

Why mention this? Because it speaks to the fact that her many books — the “good” ones and all the others — arose out of her being the child of Americans who spent virtually their entire lives in China as members of the Southern Presbyterian Mission. To say the least, hers was the sort of rigidly Christian upbringing in which teetotalism was simply a given.

The S in Pearl S. Buck stood for Sydenstricker. Her mother, Caroline Sydenstricker, was a caring and determined woman who, all her life, kept swallowing hardships and tragedies one after another. Pearl was born in the U.S. in 1892 but was taken to China while still an infant. Her father, Absalom Sydenstricker, was already a dozen years into his life's work there: evangelizing Chinese who either ignored or despised him. But he was not a man easily discouraged. He was assigned to the countryside in Jiangsu (Kiangsu was the romanization in use back then). He made only 10 converts in his first 10 years in an area that was equal in size to Texas and had a limitless abundance “of souls who had never heard the Gospel.”

The quotation is from a generally excellent new biography, *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth* by Hilary Spurling (Simon & Schuster, \$27). The London edition (Profile, £15) goes by a different name — *Burying the Bones: Pearl Buck's Life in China*. The British title is a reference to the fact that there was a cemetery behind the mission station that was Pearl's first home. As a pre-schooler, she sometimes “found bones lying in the grass, mutilated



Pearl S. Buck, in the 1960s, hugging one of the children helped by Pearl S. Buck International

PEARL S. BUCK INTERNATIONAL

hands, once a head and shoulder with parts of an arm still attached ... They were so tiny she knew they belonged to dead babies, nearly always girls suffocated or strangled at birth and left out for dogs to devour.”

The Protestant and Catholic missions set up throughout China in the latter part of the 19th Century typically included schools and hospitals as well as places of Christian worship. The differences between Western and Chinese education were just as profound as those between Western and Chinese medicine, for the missionaries stressed empirical knowledge, teaching mathematics and science. Some of them also led reform campaigns in such areas as flood and famine relief.

A number of them even “actively campaigned for less oppressive treatment of women.” Absalom Sydenstricker presumably was not one of these, given that, as Ms Spurling tells us, his “distrust of women meant that he could not bring himself to believe they had souls....”

Pearl was two years old when the First Sino-Japanese War broke out: another of the humiliating defeats for China that characterised the 19th Century. In confusion, the people being invaded didn't maintain much distinction between the encroaching Japanese and foreigners generally, including westerners — especially westerners. This was one of the periods in his career when Absalom was attacked, beaten and threatened with execution.

Once, when tied up and forced to watch the agony of one of his converts who had been condemned to death, his reaction was envy that she would be getting to Heaven before him.

To his superiors, who were certainly no less devout but perhaps a bit more practical in their obsessions, Absalom was an incessant troublemaker. In 1896, with the war ended, he was relieved of his rural duties and reassigned to the bustling city of Zhenjiang (Chinkiang). It already had a base of 10 converts on which to build. The family lived overlooking the Yangzi River in three rooms that Pearl's mother "scrubbed with carbolic acid, all utensils dipped in boiling water at table, all fresh food either thoroughly cooked or disinfected with potassium permanganate before being touched." Even so, everyone seemed to take turns with illness and disease. Ms Spurling writes: "Absalom's indiscriminate preaching embarrassed Pearl ... She said she could never bring Chinese friends home in case he set about saving their souls."

With the outbreak a few years later of the Boxer Rebellion, that imperially sanctioned revolt against Western influence, a reign of terror in which thousands of missionaries and others were killed, Pearl's father resolutely continued to allow his beliefs to direct his actions. In Ms Spurling's words: "Buoyed by the prospect of martyrdom himself, Absalom refused even to consider evacuation long after most of the white population had left Zhenjiang." In time, though, the family had to go to Shanghai and the safety of the foreign military and naval forces there. It was in Shanghai that Pearl, age eight or nine, first saw water come out of a tap.

Understandably, she felt herself an outcast when she was sent back to the U.S. for a college education. As she later put it: "When I was in the Chinese world, I was Chinese, I spoke Chinese and behaved as a Chinese and ate as the Chinese did, and I shared their thoughts and feelings. When I was in the American world, I shut the door between." To which the author adds: "Keeping that door closed was the price of survival for Pearl as a child, but she spent the greater part of her life trying to open it, and keep it open."

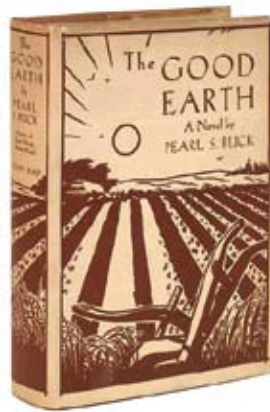
In 1914, Pearl Sydenstricker returned to China to teach. Later, she married John Lossing Buck, an American economist who became the leading foreign expert on Chinese agriculture. She remained there throughout the warlord period. At one point in the book, we see her burying fam-



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From the top: The Pearl S. Buck Birthplace in Hillsboro, West Virginia; Buck in 1932, age 40; the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel from 1932.

ily valuables in the garden to keep them out of the hands of marauding soldiers — while remembering her mother's stories of doing the same in Confederate Virginia when the Yankees were coming. (A quibble: In another place, Spurling, who is British — and also, by the way, the author

of a wonderful biography of Henri Matisse — seems confused about which side was which in the American Civil War.)

All this while, Pearl was writing essays and stories about the daily lives of ordinary Chinese. She was one of those naturals who wrote fluently and constantly. The ultimate result, *The Good Earth*, "borrowed techniques from the Chinese novel in episodic sagas covering vast territories and spanning several generations, preoccupied less with individual characterization than with the expressive power of a broad filmic vision and harsh Dickensian imagery, to penetrate the deep underlife of Chinese people and to draw Western readers in after her."

The book's success was so all-encompassing that, in retrospect, it seems a precursor to that of *Gone with the Wind* but with more important ramifications. In this period, Ms Spurling reminds us, needlessly, the West as a whole "and America in particular, operated an unspoken cultural veto against China," a place most Americans still saw in terms of Fu Manchu stereotypes. The massive novel about the inner lives of a completely oppressed and anonymous Chinese family sounded a new chord, particularly as its publication came at the same time as the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Suddenly China was a hot topic in the West. It continued to be, as the country lapsed into civil war, interrupted only by the Second World War when Mao Zedong's Communists and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists formed an uneasy temporary coalition against the Japanese, thus becoming, for the moment, allies of the U.S., Britain, Canada and the other anti-fascist powers: allies-of-convenience, one might say.

Pearl Buck, who never returned to China after 1934, emerged as a figure of great moral authority. By then she had come to understand how her father's religious zeal had cut him off from (the author's words) "even the most intractable reality" of human suffering. She renounced her ties to the church and with them the Calvinist doctrines of sin, guilt and damnation, arriving at a brand of humanitarian activism not unlike that of Eleanor Roosevelt (who became her friend). She worked hard for the rights of women, African-Americans, the disabled, and others, and for repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Under strict Communism, her works were banned in China (whereas today they are studied there but not widely read). In post-war America, her progressive views





ERIC ENNO TAMM

A century ago, Gustaf Mannerheim and Paul Pelliot took a portait with Kurmanjan Datka, the Queen of Alai, near Chigirchik Pass. A century later, author Eric Enno Tamm (far left) posed for a photograph with Sardarbek Ismailov (second from left), the great-grandson of Kurmanjan Datka, and his relatives, in a yurt atop Chigirchik Pass.

were tarred as sympathy for Communism. In fact, as Ms Spurling writes, the former Pearl Sydenstricker “had known too much too young about ideological campaigns to re-educate other people for their own good, and all such attempts filled her with revulsion.”

Sad to say that her later years became a trifle messy. She left John Lossing Buck and ran off with (and later married) the New York publisher of *The Good Earth* and most of her subsequent books. Suddenly wealthy, she grew to have quasi-imperial delusions, playing the role of grand dame for all it was worth. Following her second husband’s death, she took up with a teacher of ballroom dancing who turned out to be a male gold-digger and muddled her name with his dubious financial dealings. In brief, the story of a long useful life with an unhappy ending.

**T**here’s a connection to be made between Pearl Buck in China and *The Horse That Leaps through Clouds* (Douglas & McIntyre, \$34.95), a wonderfully fat new work of travel and history by Eric Enno Tamm, of Ottawa. As the 19th Century melted into the 20th, writes the author, “Western technology and imported consumer goods — along with radical political ideas, democracy and Christianity — were spreading to every corner of the Chinese Empire,” eliciting not joy but fear in Western capitals. One result was the so-called Great Game (the

term popularized by Rudyard Kipling’s novel *Kim*) in which Imperial Russia and Britain, along with France and some other European players, tried to out-spy one another to get control of Central Asia’s oil and other resources (a story well told in *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* and other works by Peter Hopkirk).

Just as this tomfoolery was winding down, Russia sent Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim on a two-year espionage mission from St. Petersburg to the farthest reaches of northern and western China. In later life, Mannerheim (1867–1951) became a controversial national hero in his native Finland and, for a time, its prime minister. But, in 1906, he was a colonel in the tsar’s service, posing as an ethnographer and travelling with 16 steamer trunks on a mission that would last two years. Mr. Tamm sets out to retrace his famous predecessor’s steps, following the same path across, for example, Eurasia, that “vast continent ruled by a bizarre patchwork of oil-soaked aristocrats, one outlandishly ruthless crackpot and the world’s last major Communist regime and rising superpower.”

A sophisticated journalist indeed, Mr. Tamm gathers observations like gemstones as he crosses “a gauntlet of political and geographical extremes, including some of the world’s hottest deserts, highest mountains and cruellest dictatorships” stretching 17,000 kilometres. He is too

clever to pretend he can intuit the future, but he clearly sees the present reflected in the past. For example, he notes while crossing Uzbekistan that “Khanates of blended races and tongues traditionally ruled Inner Asia. People identified themselves according to their local oases, their ruling dynasties and their allegiance to Islam. That didn’t quite fit the Soviet concept of nationality.”

**A** mere glance at his biography might suggest that the admirable Robert D. Kaplan, familiar to many for his writing in *The Atlantic* as much as for his books, must have some scary friends. He sits on the Pentagon’s defense policy board and is a senior fellow of the Center for a New American Security (whose office, according to its website, “is conveniently located directly across from the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center” in Washington). In fact he’s never been a hawkish inward-looking American exceptionalist but something of a foreign policy freethinker. Part global political analyst, part historian, part travel journalist extraordinaire, he produces books such as *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (1993) and *The End of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (1996) that are lively with speculative ideas. In the latter work, for example, he postulates (I paraphrase) that civil wars in West Africa are inevitable because national borders mimic the rivers of

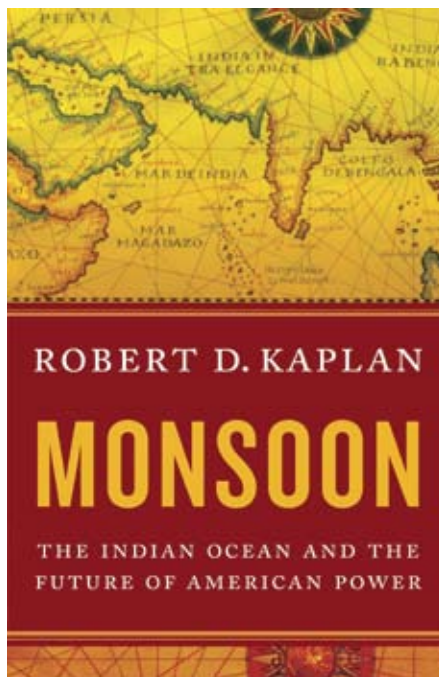


the region, which run east to west, while tribal loyalties run north-south.

His new book *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (Random House of Canada, \$33) deals with what the late C.R. Boxer, the British historian of Dutch and Portuguese colonialism, called Monsoon Asia: the cultures that run south from China and India between the African continent and the Australian. In Mr. Kaplan's emphatic view, this is where the action has shifted to, now that Washington is faced with having to share economic and political power with Beijing and New Delhi. "The Indian Ocean region is more than just a stimulating geography," he writes. "It is an *idea* because it provides an insightful visual impression of Islam, and combines the centrality of Islam with global energy politics and the importance of world navies, in order to show us a multi-layered, multi-polar world above and beyond the headlines in Iraq and Afghanistan; it is also an idea because it allows us to see the world whole, within a very new and yet very old framework, complete with its own traditions and characteristics, without having to drift into bland nostrums about globalization." His belief in naval power, like his belief in a world neatly compartmentalized in maps, is daringly retro and hence quite fashionable.

One of the reasons his books are so useful is that the military and intelligence side of his brain exceeds the think tank part. That is to say, he understands the concept of war games — what would happen if this took place instead of that, or vice-versa, in endless permutations — and has mastered a literary form in which to express such exercises: a very different matter from simply writing to promote one policy or another.

In this respect, he is worth quoting at length in a typical moment: "While China seeks to expand its influence vertically, that is, reaching southward down to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, India seeks to expand its influence horizontally, reaching eastward and westward to the borders of Victorian age British India, parallel to the Indian Ocean. Chinese president Hu Jintao, according to one report, has bemoaned China's sea-lane vulnerability, referring to it as his country's 'Malacca dilemma,' a dependence on the narrow and vulnerable Strait of Malacca for oil imports from which China must somehow escape. It is an old fear, for Ming China's world was disrupted in 1511 when the Portuguese conquered Malacca. In the



Robert Kaplan's new book, *Monsoon*, deals with the cultures that exist south of China and India between the African continent and the Australian.

21st Century an escape from the Malacca dilemma means, among other things, eventually using Indian Ocean ports to transport oil and other energy products via roads and pipelines northward into the heart of China, so that tankers do not all have to sail through the Strait of Malacca to reach their destination. This is just one reason why China wants desperately to integrate Taiwan into its dominion, so that it can redirect its naval energies to the Indian Ocean."

The modern history of China is decorated — littered, some might say — with



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the sort of shady westerners politely called soldiers of fortune. For example, an American, Frederick Townsend Ward (1831–62), trained the Ever Victorious Army that defeated the quasi-Christian rebels in the Taiping Rebellion, the bloodiest civil war in world history. But the richest period for those looking to make a fortune as western advisers began with the republican overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and continued through the 1920s and beyond, when warlordism created a new market for imported military know-how.

That was the era of such figures as Frank (One-Arm) Sutton (1884–1944), an Old Etonian who carried his golf clubs into battle at Gallipoli in the First World War and died a prisoner of the Japanese in the Second. In between, he made a fortune selling arms to Chinese bandits and then went broke in Vancouver real estate. He was a contemporary (one thinks of them together, like Keats and Shelley or Burke and Hare) of General Morris Abraham (Two-Gun) Cohen (1889–1970), who at various times was a cowboy and ward-heeler on the Prairies, Sun Yat-sen's bodyguard, an arms dealer, a deal-maker, a fixer and a spy — not to mention a salesman for Rolls-Royce in China. Some have

said that only his thorough grounding in Alberta politics enabled him to survive serving more than one Chinese faction at a time. And none of these people who freelanced to warlords was more intrinsically slippery and preposterous than Trebitsch Lincoln (1879–1943), a former Montreal missionary and eventual Buddhist monk.

Now comes a full biography of a much less successful and hence much lesser known example of a western military dreamer with grand designs for China. In *Homer Lea: American Soldier of Fortune* (University Press of Kentucky, US\$40), Lawrence M. Kaplan, a staff historian with the U.S. military, tells the tale of someone who, like General Cohen, became involved in anti-imperial politics within the Chinese diaspora in North America. Mr. Lea, who was quite young (he was born in 1876), was in sympathy with K'ang Yu-wei, an adviser to the Emperor Kwanghsu, who had proposed a set of liberal reforms in the 1890s. This was followed by a palace coup by the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi. In response, K'ang Yu-wei organized a secret resistance movement called the Pao Huang Hui to restore the emperor to the throne.

Lea was not physically prepossessing.

He was five feet three inches tall and was a hunchback. What's more, he suffered from chronic nephritis (then called Bright's disease) and may have been a diabetic as well. Yet he had great personal magnetism — and abundant chutzpah. As Mr. Kaplan writes, "Lea recognized a great opportunity for adventure with the Chinese and promoted himself among the reformers as a military expert, claiming to be a relative, which he was not, of the famous Confederate general Robert E. Lee." He dropped out of Stanford University in California and arrived in China in time to train troops during the Boxer Rebellion. That over with, he proposed using 20 colleges and universities round the United States as fronts for raising a Chinese-American army to be sent into battle across the Pacific. The federal government shut him down under the neutrality laws. So he went back to China on his own. There, like Morris Cohen, he became associated with Sun Yat-sen and was made a general: General Kam Ma Li. He finally succumbed to his various ailments in 1912, the year the Qing Dynasty fell. He was 35.

George Fetherling is author of the novel *Walt Whitman's Secret* (Random House).



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# From Russia with love, the Doukhobors set sail

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

**B**ewildered spectators watched as 700 men, women and children trudged through the port city of Batum, Russia, in pairs, carrying boards on their shoulders. It was December 1898 and they were volunteers from a large group of Doukhobors preparing for the largest single migration across the Atlantic to North America. They were bound for Canada in search of a better life.

Before sailing, the immigrants prepared the ship, which was intended to carry freight and livestock, by building bunks in the hold from the lumber they carried across the city and by loading it with a month's supplies for 2,140 people. Nearly 200 more stowed away. On Jan. 20, 1899, when they reached Halifax, 2,300 Doukhobors disembarked and were welcomed by James A. Smart, deputy minister of the interior.

The Doukhobors emerged as an organized movement in the 18th Century. They renounced the Russian Orthodox Church and its ritual of worshipping icons, hence their original name "Ikono-bortsi" (icon wrestlers). In 1785, Archbishop Ambrosius called them "Doukho-bortsi" — spirit wrestlers — implying they struggled against the Spirit of God. The dissidents adopted the name, declaring that they "wrestle with and for the Spirit of God" against evil.

Doukhobors based their religion on two commandments, to recognize and love God and to love one's neighbour. Believing that killing animals assaulted human sensibilities, they resolved not to consume animal flesh. They rejected alcohol and tobacco as well as violence and militarism. Ironically, their stand against killing was not favoured by church authorities. The Czarist State did not favour it either. When 7,000 Doukhobor soldiers protested by destroying their weapons in 1895, the defiant act led to exile and persecution.

The Doukhobors' plight received international attention. Leo Tolstoy, American Quakers and many Canadians helped the Doukhobors immigrate to the territories of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, where they were promised 65 hectares of free land each. They were invited by Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior, because they were



successful farmers and the prairies wanted settling. The Russian government encouraged them to leave.

Upon arrival in Halifax, a large crowd, curious to see the "new pilgrim fathers," met the Doukhobors. From Halifax, they sailed up the Bay of Fundy to St. John (now Saint John), N.B., the eastern terminal of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which had been contracted to carry the immigrants west. At stops along the way, women's groups gave the children apples, oranges and sweets. A Montreal committee gave them heavy clothing to ward off the prairie cold and in Winnipeg a committee escorted them to reception centres to prepare for settlement. By June, 7,500 Doukhobors had settled on the prairies in three communal blocs, eventually establishing 61 villages in what is now Saskatchewan.

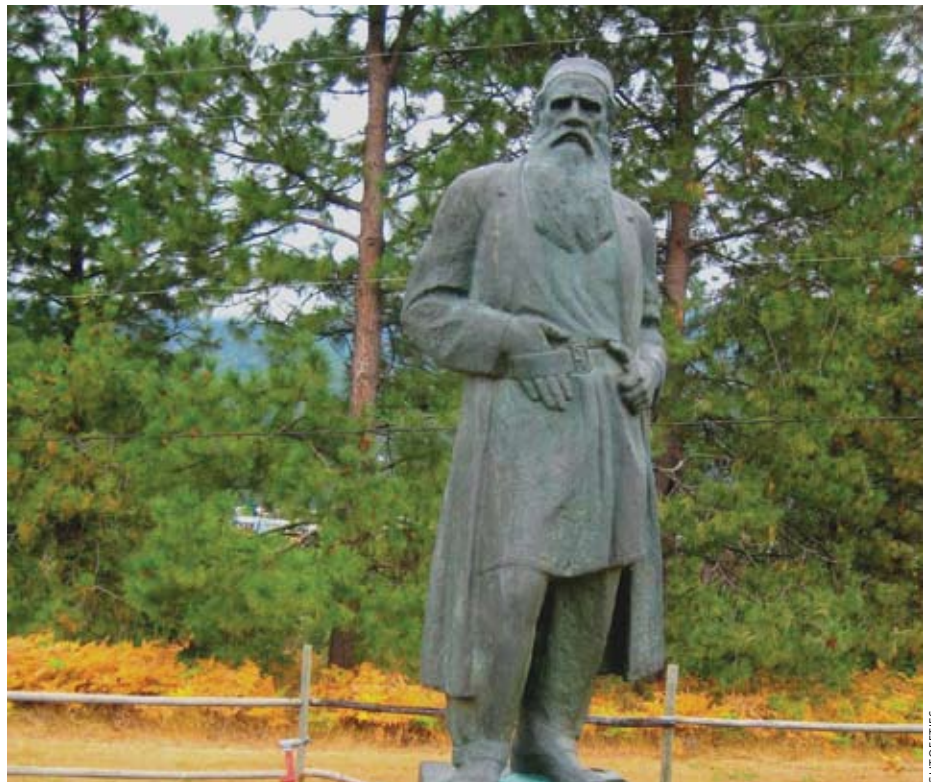
The Doukhobors' warm reception was not unanimous. Opponents of Sifton's plan expressed reservations, largely motivated by fear of the unknown. No one knew

these Russian peasants who refused military service, rejected the church, lived and worked in communal colonies and spoke no English. They were different, not of the preferred British, French or German stock, and therefore, to many, inferior, lacking the qualities that make good Canadians.

Objections were raised in newspapers and political speeches. If there were a war, Canadian soldiers would have to fight "in defence of the favoured foreigner." It was better "to distribute them in small groups throughout the country so they could easily assimilate" and Canada could "break up as far as possible (their) herding proclivities."

However, 19th-Century Canada's great needs were population and the opening of the West to agriculture. Within six years of the Doukhobors' arrival, Sifton's plan saw a fivefold increase in the prairie population, and the new Canadians were meeting the challenges of cultivating the prairies.

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is the associate editor of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.



A statue of Leo Tolstoy at B.C.'s Doukhobor Discovery Centre



## A relaxed chic dinner



MARGARET DICKENSON

This is the second article of six highlighting themes from my new cooking and lifestyle TV series, *Margaret's Table*. Each theme guides viewers and *Diplomat's* readers through practical entertaining options while always maintaining a sense of occasion.

Home entertaining is on the rise. And when it comes to entertaining, it is important to be able to pull together a classy meal without too much time or effort. Some may find this a potentially stressful challenge; however, my approach is logical and realistic.

It is no surprise that the menu should be one's first concern. My philosophy is to start by creating a basic three-course menu (a starter, main course and dessert) where each course is relatively quick and easy to prepare and where each definitely displays some pizzazz. The objective is that all three elements of this basic menu should — each in its own way — impress or capture the attention of those at the table. This could be achieved through the choice of ingredients, presentation or both.

Ingredients that are rather unique, perhaps those perceived as being slightly extravagant (which may not necessarily be the case), or exciting combinations of ingredients are always a welcome treat. When contemplating the choice of recipes, certainly reject those with a lengthy list of ingredients or that require a lot of preparation. Take advantage of products already on hand as well as commercial options. These include everything from soups, sauces (savoury or sweet), vinaigrettes, ice creams, chocolate cups to baked goods including meringue nests and pastry shells.

The starter might be a soup, salad or an appetizer of some kind. Regardless of the choice, remember that first impressions count. When serving a soup, heighten the presentation factor by garnishing artisti-

cally with fresh herbs, drizzles of heavy cream, seafood, or by serving it in an original manner — cappuccino style in a demi-tasse cup, in a parfait glass with a spoon balanced horizontally across the top of the glass, or baked in a cup with a puff-pastry dome. An easy presentation trick for a salad (as seen in the previous issue of *Diplomat*), is to serve it in individual bistro bowls or large plates which allow the salad to breathe. Scattering crushed black peppercorns over a portion of the plate or bowl rims, tends to subtly frame the salad and adds a quick bit of flair. As for appetizers, I find they take on new appeal when presented as stacks, trios, in luscious layers, or “stuffed” in some manner. With this in mind, plus a little imagination, tried and true long-time favourite recipes can be reinvented as new culinary masterpieces.

The greatest challenge when it comes to the main course and dessert, is to select recipes that will wow guests while demanding relatively little last-minute preparation just before serving. Reducing this final preparation to what is basically an assembly process with a minimum amount of cooking and/or reheating is an important tip and a fail-proof technique to achieving a relaxed dinner.

The main course shrimp recipe which follows is one such example. Imagine

exquisitely spiced garlic butter-sautéed butterflied shrimp, snuggled into a bed of exotic squid ink fettuccini, bathed with a rich and mildly edgy sun-dried tomato butter sauce. It is definitely a show-stopper particularly when super-colossal shrimp are used.

The shrimp may be peeled, butterflied and refrigerated up to a day in advance, ready for last-minute sautéing. The fettuccini may be cooked and the butter sauce virtually prepared an hour or two before guests arrive. As an accompaniment, think of adding 2 spears of tender-crisp asparagus cooked (in advance and reheated), drizzled with sesame oil and arranged in a criss-cross manner over the shrimp.

As for dessert, it is always quick and easy to dazzle palates when dessert includes a chocolate cup, pastry shell or meringue nest filled with fruit, whipped cream, lemon curd or a delectable combination of some of these delightful ingredients. Try to include lively fresh herbs or edible flowers as well as artistic swirls of a sauce or drizzle. As I say, presentation gives you free bonus points and should not be ignored.

To render this menu undisputedly chic, it's always best to add a fourth course — perhaps a small portion of sorbet served before main course as a palate cleanser.

Bon Appétit!



LARRY DICKENSON

Extraordinary sun-dried tomato shrimp

**Extraordinary Sun-dried Tomato Shrimp**  
*Makes 4 servings*

20 colossal shrimp, deveined and peeled  
 8 oz (225 g) fettuccini/linguine of choice  
 To taste salt  
 4 tbsp (60 mL) garlic butter or butter, divided  
 1 recipe Garlic Wine Butter Sauce\*  
 To taste crushed black peppercorns  
 1/2 cup (125 mL) julienne cut sun-dried tomatoes in seasoned oil (drained)  
 Extra heavy cream to thin sauce (optional)

1. Peel shrimp keeping tails intact; butterfly and set aside.
2. Cook pasta in boiling salted water until al dente. Drain well and toss with 2 tbsp (30 mL) of garlic butter; set aside.
3. Prepare Garlic Wine Butter Sauce\* to point of blending in heavy cream; remove from heat.
4. Just before serving, in a large heavy skillet over medium heat, sauté shrimp in remaining 2 tbsp (30 mL) of garlic butter. Season with salt and pepper, and cook until almost done. Transfer shrimp to another large skillet, leaving the black little bits from frying behind.
5. To finish the sauce, place small skillet with partially prepared sauce over medium-low heat and warm; whisk in butter a few cubes at a time. Remove from heat promptly; season with salt and pepper.
6. Add sun-dried tomatoes and Garlic Wine Butter Sauce to sautéed shrimp in large skillet; toss. Add extra heavy cream, as desired, to thin the sauce.
7. Serve (3 to 5 shrimp per serving) over hot pasta. Bathe shrimp and pasta with remaining sauce.

\* To make the Garlic Wine Butter Sauce, in a small skillet over low heat, combine 1/3 cup (80 mL) of chopped green onion, 2 1/2 tbsp (38 mL) of both raspberry vinegar and dry white wine, 2/3 tsp (3.5 mL) of both grated fresh gingerroot (peeled) and finely chopped fresh garlic and 1/3 tsp (2 mL) of powdered mustard. Cook the mixture until only about 1 1/3 tbsp (20 mL) of the liquid remains. Blend in 2 1/2 tbsp (38 mL) of heavy cream (35% fat); set aside. Before serving, using almost 1/3 cup (80 mL) of room temperature unsalted butter (cut into cubes), whisk in the butter, a few pieces at a time, until it is completely incorporated. Promptly remove the sauce from the heat, add salt and crushed black peppercorns to taste and combine with shrimp.

Margaret Dickenson is a TV host and author. See [www.margaretstable.ca](http://www.margaretstable.ca)



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\*Minimum food and beverage required.



# Icelandic home full of light and art

By Margo Roston



DYANNE WILSON

Icelandic Ambassador Sigríður Anna Thordardóttir has created a relaxed atmosphere in the home she shares with her husband, Jon Thorsteinsson.

Icelandic Ambassador Sigríður Anna Thordardóttir sometimes answers the phone herself in her small embassy office. With a staff of only two, her driver acts as the receptionist in between driving her to official functions.

And this same relaxed atmosphere permeates her residence in the heart of the old village of Rockcliffe. This modern stone house's light-filled open spaces features big windows for its more than 7,000 square feet.

It was still under construction in 2000 when Iceland bought it for its new ambassador. Built by Claridge Homes and designed by architect Douglas Hardie, its interior designer was Susan Kennedy

of Griffin Kennedy Interiors. She was responsible for the pale wood floors and soft yellow walls of the reception areas and changes made to the original plan, including gussying up and enlarging the kitchen to accommodate large embassy parties.

"It's perfect," says the ambassador, who with her husband, Rev. Jon Thorsteinsson, has filled the house with their extensive art collection. Along with their own works by Icelandic artists, there are six paintings on loan from the National Gallery of Iceland. One of their favourites and a piece they own, is called *The Raven*, a hunk of carved driftwood by Icelandic artist Saemundur Valdimarsson. Several landscapes are the work of Mr. Thorsteinsson, alongside a

collection of his ceramics, displayed on a table in the foyer, alongside a piece by his teacher at the Ottawa School of Art, Jim Thomson.

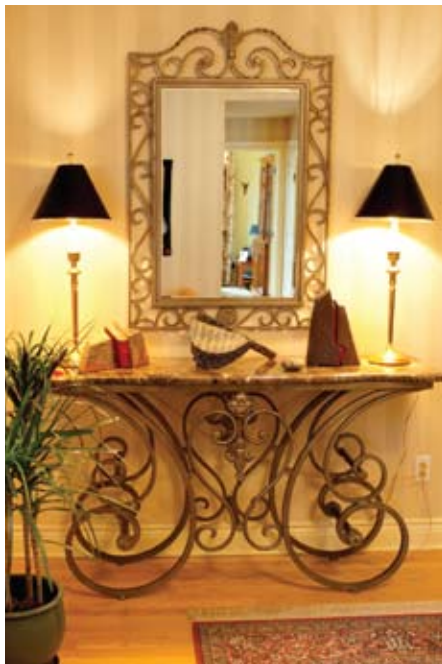
The ambassador's husband was a pastor in the Icelandic Lutheran Church for 34 years and his last congregation had 8,600 members. "I was a bit tired," he says, "and my wife gave me the opportunity to retire."

This is the first posting for the ambassador who was a member of parliament for 16 years, minister of the environment from 2004-2006, and minister for Nordic cooperation in 2005-2006.

The house has a large entrance hall with a sweeping staircase leading directly



DYANNE WILSON



DYANNE WILSON PHOTOS

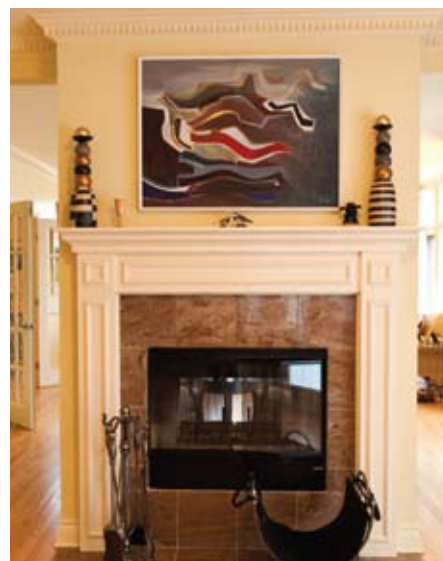


The Icelandic residence is a new building that was still under construction in 2000 when the government bought it. Interior designer Susan Kennedy was responsible for the pale wood floors and the yellow walls in the main reception rooms, such as those pictured above. The home is full of art, including the pieces on the decorative table.





The ambassador can serve up to 18 people for a sit-down dinner in her dining room. At right, the reverse side of the fireplace pictured on page 54.



up to a comfy space the couple uses as a TV room. The two main reception rooms are divided by a large fireplace, open on both sides. The smaller room has a piano, often used by the ambassador's husband, who also plays guitar.

"The house is very comfortable and spacious," says the ambassador, who can entertain 200 at a reception and seat 18 for a sit-down dinner.

She admits that guests don't get to try typical Icelandic food at the embassy table. "That's too hard," she says, "Most traditional food is based on fresh fish and lamb that's too hard to import." She uses a local caterer for formal dinners; she cooks for small groups of family and friends. Beautiful sterling silver flatware and blown glass stemware, all made in Iceland, are used for formal dinners.

For summer, the house boasts two outdoor patios, and there's a basement with a one-bedroom apartment, another bedroom and a conference room. The second floor has four bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. One of those is the pastor's "painting room" but there's plenty of room when the couple's three daughters come to Canada with their husbands and seven children.

Over coffee, the ambassador, who is wearing a bright red silk jacket, wiggles her feet and points out her stylish high heeled red "leather" shoes. "Fish skin," she says proudly. She also digs out a handbag with grey leather fish skin detailing. "That's the natural colour of the fish."

It probably tasted as good as it looks. What better green product for a smartly dressed Icelandic ambassador to show to Canada?

Margo Roston is *Diplomat's* culture editor.

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## New Heads of Mission

**Clemencia Forero Ucros**  
Ambassador of Colombia



Ms Forero was an academic before she joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1978. She studied political science and philosophy before going to Harvard to study the relationship between the European Union and the Ibero-American countries. She's also taught foreign policy at Colombian universities.

At Foreign Affairs, she's had a varied career, including serving as acting secretary general of the ministry and special adviser to the United Nations Development Program. She was ambassador to Finland, Iceland, Norway and Denmark, national coordinator for the Summit of the Americas and ambassador to the United Nations organizations in Geneva. Most recently, she served as vice-minister of foreign affairs.

Ms Forero is married and has four children.

**Luis Carlos Delgado Murillo**  
Ambassador of Costa Rica



Mr. Delgado has had one previous foreign ministry posting, that time as minister-counsellor and deputy head of mission at the United Nations in Geneva between 1982 and 1985. But his career has otherwise been in the civil service and academia.

He's been teaching at the University

of Costa Rica in the faculty of economics since 1993. Prior to that, he worked as an adviser and coordinator with the employment generation project at the UNHCR, and then, with the same office as a consultant responsible for labour re-integration. He worked as an assistant general manager at a bank for five years while teaching at the university and served as manager of the administrative board for saving and lending at the university between 2000 and 2002.

Mr. Delgado is married and has four daughters.

**Wael Aboulmagd**  
Ambassador of Egypt



Mr. Aboulmagd graduated from Ain Shams University's law school in 1986 and, three years later, received a master of law from the University of London. He is now a PhD candidate in law at the University of Cairo.

He joined the foreign service in 1987 and was posted to Geneva three years later. In 1992, he became second secretary at the UN mission in New York and returned to legal affairs at the ministry in 1995, with the rank of first secretary. In 1997, as first secretary, he served in India and then returned to headquarters as legal adviser to the minister. In 2003, he was counsellor in Washington, D.C. and, while there, he became deputy head of mission. For the past three years, he has served as assistant deputy foreign minister for human rights, social and humanitarian affairs.

Mr. Aboulmagd is married and has two children.

**Eleftherios Anghelopoulos**  
Ambassador of Greece

Mr. Anghelopoulos studied law at the University of Athens and sociology at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris before joining the ministry of foreign affairs in 1979.



He worked in economic relations, communications and finally on the Cyprus-Turkey file before being sent to the permanent mission to the European Communities in Brussels in 1983. Six years later, he went to Houston, Texas, as consul. He was later posted to Moscow, and Washington (as deputy head of mission) before being sent to Georgia as ambassador. In 2008, he returned to headquarters as director of the South-Eastern Europe department and a year later, was director general of economic relations.

Mr. Anghelopoulos speaks Greek, English, French, German and Italian. He is married and has two children.

**Sofia Lastenia Cerrato Rodriguez**  
Ambassador of Honduras



Ms Rodriguez comes to her position from the world of business. After completing studies at the Autonomous National University of Honduras and the Central American Technological University in Honduras, she joined Banco Atlantida, where she spent five years as a business executive. In 2003, she joined BAC Honduras where she first worked as vice-manager of corporate business and then became head of the commercial bank in 2004.

From 2006 until she took her position in Canada, she worked as a professor of business law at the Agricultural Pan-American School Zamorano.

**John Raymond Bassett**  
Ambassador of Ireland



Mr. Bassett has a PhD in biochemistry from Trinity College in Dublin. For the first year of his career, he worked as a clinical biochemist at the Mater Hospital in Dublin, and then he joined the Irish department of foreign affairs.

He's had postings in Denmark, England and Australia but he spent the bulk of his career working on the Northern Ireland peace process. He was part of the Irish government delegation during the negotiations that led to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in 1998. He's had two postings to Belfast, most recently serving as head of the Irish government office there (2000-2005). For the five years previous to this posting, he's been assistant secretary general in the foreign affairs department.

Mr. Bassett is married to Patricia Howe and they have five children.

**Basheer Fawwaz Zoubi**  
Ambassador of Jordan



Mr. Zoubi's posting in Canada represents a return for him. Between 1999 and 2003, he worked at the embassy in Ottawa, for the last two years as deputy head of mission. He also studied economics at a graduate level at Carleton University.

He joined Jordan's foreign service in 1991, beginning his career at headquarters before being sent to the UN, where he

served for five years. After that, he served in Ottawa, returned to headquarters and then was posted to the UN as deputy permanent representative, where he spent five years. He was working as director of European Affairs when he was posted to Canada.

Mr. Zoubi has a bachelor's degree in economics and has studied terrorism, administration and economics at the postgraduate level. He is married and has three children.

**Mathabo Tsepa**  
High Commissioner for Lesotho



Mrs. Tsepa comes to diplomacy from academia and part of her academic career was spent at the University of British Columbia. She attended National Teacher Training College in 1990 and then studied science at the National University of Lesotho, eventually obtaining a bachelor's degree in science education.

In 2008, she completed a PhD in environmental education at the University of British Columbia. At various universities, she has served as a research assistant, graduate adviser, assistant teacher, teacher, graduate instructor and, in 2008, as a lecturer at her alma mater, the National University of Lesotho.

**Abdulrahman Mohamed Abututa**  
Ambassador of Libya

Mr. Abututa comes to diplomacy after a long and varied career in law. He has a PhD in criminal law from Poitiers University in France and a master's degree in criminal science from Grenoble University.

He began his career as an assistant lecturer at Benghazi University's law school in 1972. By 1982, he was head of postgraduate studies at Younis University. He later served as dean of the law school at Gar Younis and following that, as director of the Scientific Research Centre at Al-Fateh University. From 1990 to 2005, he was a judge counsellor at the Libyan Supreme



Court, after which he served as chief justice from 2006 to 2010.

Mr. Abututa has published in numerous legal and scientific periodicals. He speaks Arabic, French and English.

**Zoran Veljic**  
Ambassador of Serbia



Mr. Veljic studied law for five years at the University of Belgrade before passing the diplomatic consular exam in 1974, a year after he joined foreign affairs. For the first seven years of his career, he worked as a researcher. He became counsellor of neighbouring countries in 1980, taking over the section in 1983. In 1985, he became an undersecretary and from 1987 to 1990, he was deputy minister.

His first posting abroad was as consul-general in Sydney, Australia. He returned to the ministry to become chief of protocol, a position he held for six years. For the following year, he was foreign policy adviser to the president of Serbia and Montenegro. He served as ambassador to Korea from 2004 to 2009 and was again serving as chief of protocol when he was appointed as ambassador to Canada.

**Teppo Tauriainen**  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden

Mr. Tauriainen is a career diplomat who joined the foreign ministry in 1987 after completing his studies in business, economics and law at the University of





**Alex Crescent Massinda**  
High Commissioner for Tanzania



Mr. Massinda joined the foreign ministry in 1977 after studies in international relations in Dar Es Salaam.

From 1982 to 1987, he was first secretary at the embassy in Ethiopia. Between 1997 and 1999, he served as deputy chief of protocol before being appointed deputy chief of mission at Tanzania's embassy in Washington from 2000 to 2005. During that period, he was Tanzania's representative to the international cotton adversary committee in Washington. In 2007, he given the title ambassador and worked at the foreign ministry as director of Asia and Australasia. While serving as high

commissioner to Canada, he is dually accredited to Cuba.

Mr. Massinda is married and has four children.

**Elbio Oscar Rosselli**  
Ambassador of Uruguay



Mr. Rosselli's position as ambassador to Canada must feel like déjà vu — he held the same post between 1993 and 1998. The career diplomat joined foreign affairs shortly after completing his studies, obtaining a doctorate in diplomacy from the University of Uruguay and a master of arts from Tufts University.

Prior to his first mission to Ottawa, he had postings in Washington as first



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secretary and in Geneva as minister-counsellor at GATT. After Canada, he returned to headquarters and was then sent to Belgium as ambassador to the European Communities. Between 2006 and 2008, he served as permanent representative at the United Nations and has most recently been an adviser to the foreign affairs minister.

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## Non-heads of mission

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First Secretary

**Angola**  
**Antonio Francisco Da Conceição**  
First Secretary

**Australia**  
**Trudi Ann Molenaar**  
Attaché  
**Bruce Geoffrey Soar**  
Deputy High Commissioner  
**Michael Gerard Garrety**  
Defence Attaché

**Azerbaijan**  
**Goshgar Zeynalov**  
Attaché

**Belarus**  
**Roman Sobolev**  
Counsellor and Chargé d'affaires  
**China**  
**Tuan Jiang**  
Third Secretary

**Cuba**  
**Yoel Figueredo Turro**  
Attaché

**Dominican Republic**  
**Melvin Ernesto Paredes Forzani**  
Counsellor

**France**  
**Philippe Marie C. Carlevan**  
Counsellor

**Ghana**  
**Sheila Anerley Ashley**  
First Secretary

**Greece**  
**Leonidas Maniatis**  
Attaché

**Hungary**  
**Gyongyver Ildiko Kalmancey**  
Attaché

**Italy**  
**Nicola Lener**  
Deputy Head of Mission

**Japan**  
**Noriaki Sadamoto**  
Second Secretary

**Jordan**  
**Adli Al-Khaledi**  
First Secretary

**Mexico**  
**Guillermo Fonseca Leal**  
Minister  
**Jaime Herrera Romo**  
Naval Attaché

**Nigeria**  
**Umar Alhaji Nata Ala**  
Minister  
**Ahmed Sule**  
Minister-Counsellor  
**Amosa Yusuf Umar**  
Minister  
**Sunday Nicholas Adeleke**  
Attaché  
**Bola Ayoka Asaju**  
First Secretary

**Philippines**  
**Minerva Jean Falcon**  
Deputy Head of Mission

**Poland**  
**Wlodzimierz Marian Zdunowski**  
Minister-Counsellor and Consul  
**Jaroslawn Krzysztof Kurek**  
Deputy High Commissioner  
**Maria Teresa Zdunowska**  
Second Secretary

**Romania**  
**Raluca Truscanu**  
First Secretary  
**Teodor Coman**  
Attaché

**Russia**  
**Igor Girenko**  
Counsellor  
**Roman Shevchenko**  
Third Secretary

**Rwanda**  
**Fixer Eugene Ngoga**  
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Attaché  
**Abdulwahed Ayed Alnafil Alhadi**  
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**Mohammad Sadiq A. Sadiq**  
Attaché  
**Mohammad Mordhi**

**M. Arabia Al Qarni**  
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**Oulimata Cissé Teye**  
Attaché

**Sweden**  
**Nils David Lunderquist**  
Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission

**Turkey**  
**Eyup Kiliç**  
Attaché

**United Arab Emirates**  
**Mohammed Saeed Mohammed Alkaabi**  
Counsellor  
**Mahaba Eissa Sultan Alzaabi**  
Second Secretary

**United Kingdom**  
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**THIS PAGE:** 1. To mark Mexico's national day, Ambassador Francisco J. Barrio and his wife, Hortensia, hosted a reception at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The Barrios are shown with 12-year-old Yamin Naemi, who sang the Mexican national anthem, and Madison Pimentel, 11, who sang O Canada. (Photo: Jennifer Campbell) 2. Turkish Ambassador Rafet Akgünay and his wife, Zeynep, attended an exhibition entitled "Poppies" at the Canadian War Museum. From left, The Akgünays, Turkish painter Hikmet Çetinkaya and his wife, Oytun Çetinkaya. 3. To mark Chile's national day, Ambassador Roberto Ibarra hosted a reception at his residence, featuring performers from Group Arco Iris. (Photo: Jennifer Campbell) 4. House of Commons Speaker Peter Milliken received a bulava, a Ukrainian symbol of political power, from Ukrainian Ambassador Ihor Ostash, who presented it on behalf of the Ukrainian-Canadian Professional and Business Association of Ottawa. 5. Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv attended an event put on in conjunction with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa to kick off Holocaust Education Week in November. She's shown with MP Irwin Cotler. (Photo: Peter Waiser)





THIS PAGE: 1. Guatemalan Ambassador Georges de la Roche attended the annual fall fundraiser of the Guatemala Stove Project. The event raises funds to build improved cooking stoves and help the indigenous Maya in the western highlands. From left: Artist Juan Manuel Vasquez, volunteers Tom Clarke, Rita Redner, Liz Ballantyne-Jackson, hosts Anne-Marie Robinson and Otto Navas. (Photo: Pierre Fortier) 2. American Ambassador David Jacobson and his wife, Julie, attended the NAC Gala this fall. (Photo: Dyanne Wilson) 3. Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet visited Canada in November and presented Defence Minister Peter MacKay with traditional Estonian mittens after their meeting. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 4. German Ambassador Georg Witschel and his wife, Sabine, hosted a reception to mark 20 years of German unity. From left, Michael von Herff, senior vice-president of Fleishman-Hillard International Communications, and Mr. Witschel. 5. To mark the national day of Afghanistan, the embassy and the Aga Khan Foundation Centre jointly hosted a reception. Here, Carleton student Humaira Suliman wears Afghan national dress. (Photos: Jennifer Campbell)





**THIS PAGE :** 1. Romanian Ambassador Elena Stefoi hosted a national day reception Dec. 1 at her embassy. She's shown here with former Gov. Gen. Michaelle Jean. (Photo: Sam Garcia) 2. Netherlands Ambassador Wim Geerts attended a conference entitled "The Future of Remembrance" at the Canadian War Museum. He's shown here with student participants. 3. Gov. Gen. David Johnston and his wife, Sharon, went to the National War Memorial as part of his installation ceremony. (Photos: Frank Scheme) 4. Norwegian Ambassador Else Berit Eikeland hosted a meeting with Canadian parliamentarians and Magnor Nerheim, director general of the Norwegian ministry of fisheries and coastal affairs. She's shown here with MP Lawrence MacAulay. (Photo: Uille Baum) 5. Chan Ho Ha and his wife, Young Shin Kim, hosted a national day event at the National Gallery. (Photo: Young-Whan Kim)

# Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by the countries

January		
1	Cuba	Liberation Day
1	Haiti	Independence Day
1	Sudan	National Day
4	Myanmar	Independence Day
26	Australia	Australia Day
31	Nauru	National Day
February		
4	Sri Lanka	National Day
6	New Zealand	National Day
7	Grenada	Independence Day
11	Iran	National Day
15	Serbia	National Day
16	Lithuania	Independence Day
17	Kosovo	Independence Day
18	Gambia	Independence Day
22	Saint Lucia	Independence Day
23	Brunei Darussalam	National Day
23	Guyana	Republic Day
24	Estonia	Independence Day
25	Kuwait	National Day
27	Dominican Republic	Independence Day
March		
3	Bulgaria	National Day
6	Ghana	National Day
12	Mauritius	National Day
17	Ireland	St. Patrick's Day
20	Tunisia	Proclamation of Independence
23	Pakistan	Pakistan Day
25	Greece	Independence Day
26	Bangladesh	National Day

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# Unleash the beasts: The season for big, decadent wines



PIETER VAN DEN WEGHE

Every once in a while, a beast needs to come out. The beasts are those big, dense and decadent wines which sometimes gather and linger in wine collections waiting for their moment. What better time than now to enjoy their hedonistic thrill? Winter's doldrums provide a great environment for appreciating their sinful irresistibility.

For dry whites, it's usually the generously oaked, higher-alcohol Chardonnays that are called upon to provide the most heft. However, a few other styles of white wine can provide powerful experiences, too. Though often not as high in alcohol,

Viognier, particularly from California, is on this list. These wines usually have a rich mouth-feel and burst with apricot and citrus flavours. When made in a dense style, Pinot Gris can be an interesting alternative. Whether from Alsace or Niagara, Pinot Gris of this kind is succulent with sweet fruit characteristics.

However, my favourite is white Châteauneuf-du-Pape from the southern Rhône in France. Typically made with such relatively obscure grape varieties as Grenache Blanc, Bourboulenc, Clairette and Roussanne, this wine is beautifully perfumed with fruit and floral aromas and possesses a viscous richness without relying on a crutch of new oak.

There are many grape varieties and regions which boast big reds. The south of France, particularly in warm vintages, can approach levels of density and alcohol typically associated with New World wines. Truly massive Cabernet Sauvignon with its fruit-drenched structure can be sourced from Washington State and Argentina's Mendoza. Australian Shiraz and its countless blend variations is sometimes

so dense and unctuous you can almost spread it on your toast. That said, there are two particular styles of wine which always speak to me of no-holds-barred richness.

Californian Zinfandel is certainly one of them. These monstrous, big-fruited reds can easily achieve 15 percent alcohol or more. Genetically identified as the same grape as Italy's Primitivo, some of the best examples are sourced from old vineyards in the Sierra Foothills. These profound, lush wines hold your taste buds in a very long embrace.

Of course, no dialogue about powerful wines is complete without Amarone. Hailing from Italy's Veneto region, Amarone della Valpolicella is made from later harvested Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes which are dried for three to four months on racks prior to fermentation. The resulting wine is dense, complex and opulent. Amarone is such a profound wine, it can be served with nothing more than a good dose of contemplation.

Fortified wines are easily enjoyed, too, as the temperature stays low. A great classic example is port, whether as a late-bottled vintage, an aged tawny or a vintage port. The flavours are rich and profound and the wines possess an awesome palette-coating texture. However, other fortified wine options exist, including Grenache-based Banyuls and Maury.

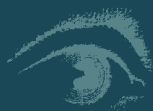
But things can reach a whole new level with two fortified wines in particular: Spanish sherries made from Pedro Ximénez and Australian Muscat. Both seriously blur the line between wine and dessert, and, when consumed with an appropriately rich dessert, can provide a near-religious experience.

Lastly, there's a particular non-wine favourite of mine which warrants mentioning. It's Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale. This beautiful beer brims with roasted nut and malt aromas. The palette is richly flavoured and is nicely balanced with a hint of bitterness in the finish. It's a diabolically good pairing with oatmeal raisin cookies.

Give in to the sheer pleasure of these hedonistic wines. They can otherwise seem intimidating and cumbersome in the warmer months of the year. With the days short and cold as they are, they're now a very welcome bit of power and warmth.

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

*say  
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to brow  
furrows  
and  
crows  
feet*



*'just for you'*



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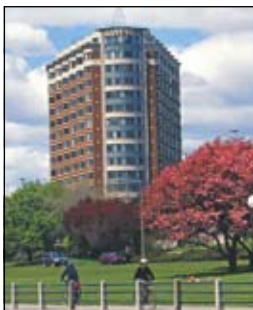
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# A tale of two capitals of culture: Tallinn and Turku

By Jennifer Campbell



Old Tallinn in its entirety was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1997.

**"W**hat role can singing play when a nation is faced with annihilation by its neighbours? Can culture hold a people together?"

So asks *The Singing Revolution*, a documentary film made in 2006 by James and Maureen Trusty about how the tiny nation of Estonia ultimately sang itself free. To get to the essence of Estonia, a traveller is continually told, you must understand the importance of the song festival.

The tradition dates back to 1869 and today, with crowds of more than 150,000 (that's more than a 10th of the country's entire population) in attendance, it's a UNESCO World Heritage tradition. The song festival had what was perhaps its most auspicious moments in 1988 when a mass night-singing demonstration of some 300,000 people, many waving Estonia's

then-forbidden black, blue and white flag, took place at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds. It was one of the first manifestations of Estonia's eventual independence from the Soviet Union.

These festivals had been allowed to continue after the Soviet occupation began in 1940, albeit with prescribed song lists. But in 1969, after the official program was over, the 25,000 assembled singers started singing the outlawed unofficial Estonian anthem *My Native Land Is My Love*. They cried out for a conductor while the song's composer, Gustav Ernesaks, sat and waited, not daring to go. Eventually though, the crowd got to him and he succumbed.

"Everyone was crying when he went up to conduct," says Kaie Tanner, secretary of the Estonian Choral Association, which organizes the festivals. "Now, everyone

just instinctively stands when this song is sung."

Estonians — whose tiny nation has only 1.4 million inhabitants — have always embraced culture, partly as a matter of survival. "We have such a small number of people that we really feel we have to keep the culture," Tanner explains. "One of our most popular folk dances is called 'kaera-jaan.' We know if we don't dance flamenco, nothing happens; but if we don't dance kaera-jaan, the dance just disappears from the world."

So Estonia's capital, Tallinn, was a natural choice for Europe's 2011 "Capital of Culture" designation, a distinction it shares with Finland's city of Turku. Though the Soviets outlawed Estonian and didn't teach it in schools, and Russian was a major second language in the country, Estonians managed to keep their

language alive, speaking it only at home, on the sly.

But the cultural embrace is not merely about language. The country has 224 museums, which together report two million visits per year and 566 public libraries, with six million visits. Its 26 theatres attract 983,000 visitors per year for live drama, an enthusiasm second only to Iceland's on a worldwide scale.

Tallinn is home to the KUMU, an ultra-modern building that houses the country's visual art treasures and was named "best museum in Europe" by the European Museum Forum in 2008.

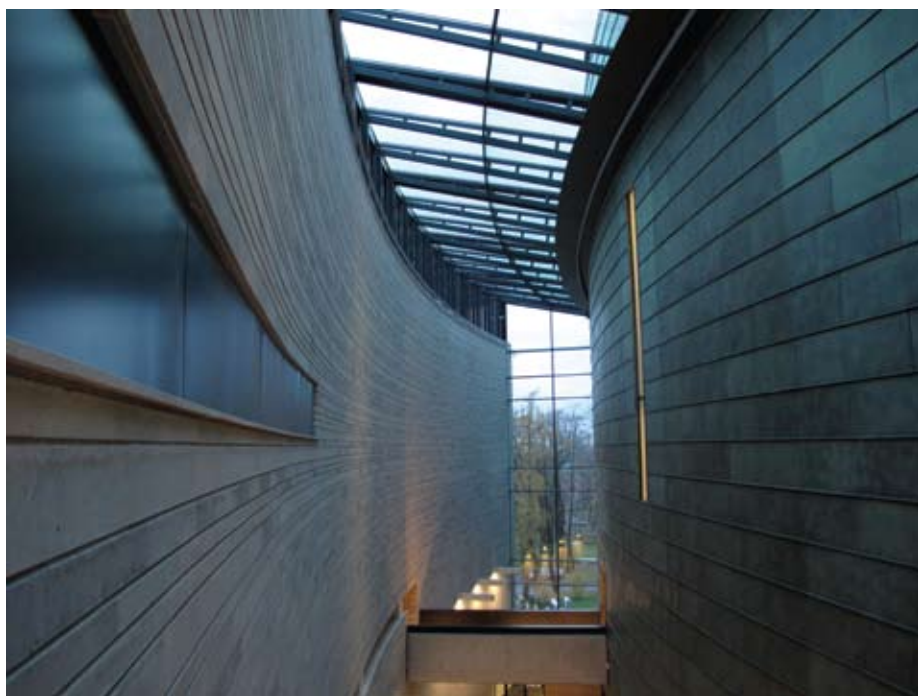
But, in fact, the whole city centre is a museum. Upper town, which stands majestically atop a limestone cliff, is the crown jewel of Old Tallinn, all of which was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997. Upper Town was Estonia's ancient stronghold before it became the home of aristocrats, lording over the Lower Town ring below. Also sitting atop this hill, across from the seat of Parliament where many of the non-violent protests took place in the 1980s, is a Russian Orthodox church, one of many structures — some more striking than others — that serve as reminders of the Soviet occupation.

Buildings in both the upper and lower towns provide a history lesson in architecture, with examples of Renaissance, Baroque, and Medieval architecture standing side by side on one street.

"In a stretch less than 100 metres long, you can see all the main styles of architecture in Europe," Tallinn tour guide Rita Moll says with the pride all Estonians show when they talk about their country and their culture.

And that culture is everywhere. During one week in November, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir performed at a 13th-Century church, jazz singer Helin-Mari Arder sang with a trio at the Estonia National Opera's cabaret lounge and Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* was performed at the National Opera. The same week, audiences could choose from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, Verdi's *La Traviata* or Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in the same venue.

The contemporary art scene — both visual and performance — is no less vibrant and that's what will be showcased during Tallinn 2011, a feast of art and culture in all forms, packaged under a "Stories from the Seaside" theme. Program director Jaanus Rohumaa intends to transform the waterfront of the city, which opens up into the Baltic Sea's Gulf of Finland, on the



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The KUMU art gallery, named best museum in Europe in 2008 by the Europe Museum Forum.



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The town square in Old Tallinn has been a gathering place for centuries.

northwest tip of the country. During Soviet times, it was completely closed and the waterfront remained largely undeveloped, with the lone exception of the terminal of the Helsinki-Tallinn ferry, until this year when Tallinn 2011 decided to develop it.

Tallinn 2011 is a year-long celebration, with a program that came together only after extensive polls of Estonia's citizens who proposed grassroots projects such as building birdhouses to install all over the city. It will also feature plenty of independent artists.

"During Soviet times, all art was institutional," explains Mr. Rohumaa. "It

was impossible to make something free." While there were underground movements, including a thriving punk scene in the '80s, there was little exposure for independently created art, and now the city is bursting with it. Mr. Rohumaa compares it to the art explosions of the '60s in London's Soho and New York's Greenwich Village.

Iiris Vesik, a 19-year-old pop sensation who's been likened to Britain's Kate Bush, is on the leading edge of the explosion. She'll perform as part of the event's Tallinn Music Week which takes place the last week in March (for three days only in



spite of the name) and will feature some 65 Estonian bands, performing all over the old town.

"Our goal is that in five years' time, if I'm talking to someone in the U.K., U.S. or Canada, they would be able to name a couple of Estonian acts," says music week director Helen Sildna.

For her part, Iiris has been performing her music — described as a "secret dimension where pop, rock, innovation synthesizers, classical piano, electronic soundscapes, catchy melodies, random madness, senseless beauty, zombies, cats and unicorns all become one" — all over Europe, as an ambassador for Tallinn 2011.

Meanwhile, a contemporary theatre company, which once staged a stunt that drew 7,000 people to hear the views of a new, and unbeknownst to them, fictional political party, is building a straw-bale stage — part art installation, part performance space. It will house shows in the city centre from May until September and then be taken apart.

"We are interested in art that is contemporary," says Tiit Ojasoo, artistic director of NO99 Theatre, who will be building the straw bale stage with his colleagues. "Things that speak about today, have a message, or are interesting to look at."

Other highlights include Eksperimenta, a huge art project where students from all over the world — from Canada to Russia, the United States to Brazil — are invited to contribute works. It takes place at the Song Festival grounds from April 26 through June 14.

While Tallinn is the toast of Europe in terms of culture this year, there's little doubt the country's longstanding embrace of the arts was the foundation for Tallinn 2011, and even less doubt that it will flourish long after the EU's designation moves on to the next city.

#### On the streets of Turku

Across the strait — an easy ferry ride from Tallinn to Helsinki and a pleasant three-hour train ride — culture seekers will find Turku, Finland's oldest city.

Turku has a distinctly European feel, but with something slightly different about it. It takes some time to pin down exactly what. But then you find out there was a great fire in 1827. Within eight hours, 2,500 buildings were destroyed and, most of its 13,000 inhabitants were left homeless. Turku's beloved "dome cathedral," built in 1300 on a hill near the bend in the Aura River that divides the city, was damaged. Iron gates melted, though its brick and



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

stone walls stayed intact.

After the fire, the city was rebuilt, this time with considerably wider streets than most of its European counterparts. And that is the difference.

But if narrow cobblestone streets are absent, culture most definitely is not. There's public art on what seems like every corner. Look down as you cross a relatively new footbridge and you'll see an ornate design carved into the cement by Jan-Erik Andersson. The public library is so replete with art you're almost tripping over it (the children's area has whimsical installations built into the floor and sealed with Plexiglass). The chimney stack of a local factory has a line of neon, red numbers. It's a mathematical puzzle (two numbers add up to the next in every case) and it was created by artist Mario Merz, ostensibly to guide ships to the port.

The Aura River, the Baltic Sea next to which Turku sits, and the neighbouring archipelago of 20,000 islands, clearly inspire the locals. The many foreign artists who come to visit succumb to Turku's charms, and stay on.

Likewise, Turku 2011 will attract thousands of tourists from all over Europe, and, indeed, the world. When Helsinki had the title in 2000, its tourism numbers jumped by 20 per cent. Turku modestly projects a rise of 15 percent which would mean 100,000 new hotel stays and a million visitors over the course of the year. It's a heady prospect for a city of fewer than 200,000 people.

Among those people, characters abound. Perhaps most notable for his charm, brilliance and utter kookiness, is



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Top, *Life on a Leaf*, the home of artist Jan-Erik Andersson; the drawbridge leading to Andersson's bedroom.

architectural artist Jan-Erik Andersson, whose home is one big art project — and his PhD thesis. Entitled *Life on a Leaf*, its footprint is shaped like a leaf. The three-storey structure, painted French's-mustard yellow, has a ribbon of shapes around its upper half — evergreen trees, blue shovels and red hearts — while the windows are formed to look like lips, diamonds and teardrops. His idea was to explore the relationship between art and architecture. Can one live in a sculpture, he asks?

Indeed one can. Inside, the floor plan is designed to evoke a meandering walk through the woods. Right angles are almost completely absent and every room



OTTO JULIA

Sweden's King Eric XIV, who was declared mad by his brother, was imprisoned in Turku Castle the late 16th Century.

has contributions from Andersson's international friends. Karin Andersen created a PhotoShopped design on the kitchen counter, with images of her as a mad chef, with pig's ears and a pig's tail. She's wielding tubes of mustard. Eggs, some whole, some cracked, are all over the counter, which Andersson says can be disconcerting when you're trying to cook breakfast.

The living room features some 20 ceiling lamps he's collected around the world. Its heart-shaped window faces across the water to Turku Castle. Sweden's King Eric XIV, who was declared mad by his brother, was imprisoned in a south-facing room there in the late 16th Century, and was said to look out the window toward the land where the yellow house now stands, because his wife Catherine was living there at the time. The heart symbolizes their painful separation.

The bathroom is a mosaic of tiles with contributions from his son (a boy with a water gun), himself (a ship like the one on which his father sailed) and his wife, the minimalist (stylized birch trees). On the third storey, which is Andersson's "blue bell" work space, New York artist Pierre St. Jacques has installed, in the floor, a video of people hurrying around Grand

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Central Station like ants. His longtime collaborator Shawn Decker, a Chicago professor and audio artist, created an installation near a bridge that leads to the master bedroom. His sounds mimic the sounds of nature and change according to outside temperatures.

The house, which will be tour-able during some period of Turku 2011, has a garlic-shaped structure on the lawn outside. Entitled SaunaLab, this is an Andersson-Decker contribution to the event. It will be placed somewhere downtown along with four other artist-created saunas, and will be open to the public. This one, made of bright yellow fiberglass, will feature the sounds of Mr. Decker. As the sauna heats up, the sounds become more intense. The sauna is, of course, one of Finland's greatest exports.

But that's not all Turku has in store for visitors. Indeed a 154-page book describes everything — and be prepared for variety — on offer. For the opening ceremonies, the former rail yard is being remade into a cultural centre. It will include a café, designed by artist Tobias Rehberger; a year-long soccer exhibit; a major exhibition on the 1827 fire; an up-scale restaurant and a 3,000-seat theatre.

A project called Turku 365 will see performance art happen every day of the year. It might be a flash mob singing Hallelujah choruses in Turku's market square, a pensioner's knitted graffiti taking over the suburbs, a ballet performed by street-sweeping machines, or a lullaby by a choir on a late-night train.

Huts erected around the city will allow people to get warm by a fire and enjoy a bit of silent reflection. There will be night-time outdoor theatre and animation to light up the main library's courtyard walls. When spring comes, two environmental artists will spell out encouraging messages in city parks using flowering bulbs. Cirque du Soleil performers will join international colleagues under a tent for Cirque Dracula in a city park from June to August.

The quirkiest item in this feast of culture? Accordion wrestling, at once a tribute to Finland's most successful Olympic sport, and a tongue-in-cheek theatre performance. Well-known contemporary accordion player Kimmo Pohjonen has composed music as accompaniment for Finland's finest wrestlers doing their thing.

There's lots more than we could cover at [www.tallinn2011.ee](http://www.tallinn2011.ee) and [www.turku2011.fi](http://www.turku2011.fi).

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor.

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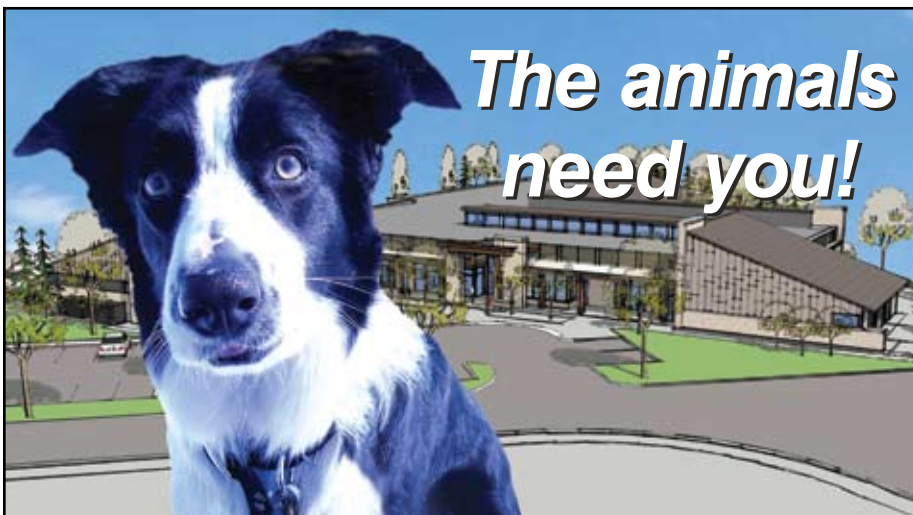
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