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News and Muse

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Message from the President



*And now, the end is near
And so I face the final curtain...* 🎵🎵🎵

This message is my last as president. It has been an enjoyable three years serving as ACRA’s president. I am also completing my third two-year

mandate on the Board of Directors and will be stepping down as a director although I will continue to sit on the Board as past-president.

Each of my six years on the Board, I have sat with directors who are at the table not for glory and certainly not for money. They are present to give of their time and effort to our Association – to plan enjoyable activities for our members, to promote charitable works and donations in the name of ACRA, to care and communicate about the welfare of our members, colleagues, friends. Danny Thomas once said, “Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It’s what you do for others.” The directors have exemplified this sentiment. It has been a privilege to work with each of the six Boards.

Good-bye from your president.
Maria

Interview with Norma Passaretti

In this interview, Norma shares with us her experiences working in Ottawa as Director General, State Ceremonial and Canadian Identity, in the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada and especially her most recent trip to England as a member of the Royal Victorian Order!

Norma, “like fine champagne” is effervescent, delightful, and provides ACRA with dedicated and joyful service.

Q: Norma, how did you end up working in Ottawa?

When I was Regional Director for The Department of The Secretary of State in Montreal, I received a phone call from the Deputy Minister in Ottawa telling me he wanted me to go to Ottawa to be responsible for Protocol for the Department. I told him I could not do that job because not only did I not know how to spell “protocol” but that I came from the east end of Montreal and I did not have a clue about anything related to protocol. I was told to get myself to Ottawa!



(cont’d on page 7)

When work, commitment and pleasure all become one and you reach that deep well where passion lives, nothing is impossible. Nancy Coey

Mario's Musings

"Summer, it's not quite like being a kid, but I still enjoy this time of year. A trip to the beach, a good book, a BBQ with friends, even sweating on the golf course. Summer always seems to be a good time for reflection, learning, and relaxing!"

"It is a great privilege to be able to enjoy the bread-and-cheese of life – the simple pleasures, of which there are so many." Charles Edward Jerningham
I would add some wine to that!

Happiness cannot be traveled to, earned, worn, or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude!"
Denis Waitley

Briefs from the Board

- ◆ The Board held its meeting on May 16.
- ◆ Details for ACRA's Annual Dinner were finalized.
- ◆ Discussion took place on the possibility of a summer ACRA activity. It was decided to hold a hotdog/corn "roast" on Saturday, August 10, 2019. Information will be sent to members when all details are finalized. **(N.B. As mentioned in an email previously sent to all members, this event will not be held.)**
- ◆ The Nomination Committee continues its work researching members who may be interested in serving on the Board of Directors. A list of possible candidates was generated and directors will be in touch with these members.
- ◆ The date and location of the Annual General Meeting were set: Thursday, September 26, 2019 at the Casa Grecque on Newman Blvd. in LaSalle.
- ◆ The last donation from this year's Special Projects budget will be given to the *Native Women's Shelter of Montreal*. The amount of the donation is \$1200. (See next page for information about the organization.)
- ◆ ACRA will be providing \$500 to the ACRA Golf Tournament Committee towards the purchase of a gift for each golfer. ACRA will also sponsor a hole at the cost of \$125.
- ◆ The Board decided that it would be fitting to honour Kevin Marciniak at this year's golf tournament in recognition of his many, many years of dedication and endless work towards the planning of the tournament.
- The scheduled Board meeting of June 13 was cancelled given that issues to be discussed were resolved in the interim between the May and June meetings:
 - The slate for Board of Directors 2019-2020 to be presented to the members was finalized.
 - The main points for the summer activity were in place and the detailed preparation will take place in the weeks to come.
- ◆ Next meeting: Thursday, August 15, 2019.

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

Achieving Balance Through Empowered Healing

Incorporated since 1987, the centre provides Aboriginal women and their children a safe and supportive environment. The centre works within the Aboriginal framework and incorporates the cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis into its teachings.

Inhouse programs offer:

- Shelter, food, clothing, assistance with low-cost housing
- Advocacy services
- Counseling, group therapy, art therapy
- Referrals for detox treatment, psychology, legal and medical needs
- Parenting skills, life skills

The *Welcoming Fire Outreach Program* provides support for Aboriginal women at risk of becoming homeless. It responds to emergency situations and crisis intervention, and assists clients in accessing social and health services,

The *Community Support Program* offers addictions counseling and support to families with children. It provides education, support and referrals as well as for promoting health lifestyles and healthy choices.

The *Iskweu Project* is aimed at reducing and eradicating the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls of Quebec. It works to access and receive adequate response from institutions that have traditionally discriminated against them.

A Review of ACRA's Charitable Donations

2018-2019

St. Gabriel's Food Bank	\$1500
St. Brendan's Food Bank	\$750
St. Patrick's Soup Kitchen	\$750
Holy Cross Food Bank	\$600
St. Jean Brebeuf Parish	\$200
S.Au.S. (Soutien Autism[e] Support)	\$1200
Native Women's Shelter of Montreal	\$1200
Sponsorship of golf hole	<u>\$125</u>
TOTAL	\$6325 *

Membership Fees \$11 100

Donations from fees \$3325

(30%)

Donations from surplus \$3000

* This amount includes only donations made by ACRA from its operating budget. It does not include donations made by individual members at Christmas time (\$4191) or at the Annual Dinner's ½ + ½ or via the Golf Tournament.

*We make a **living** by what we get...but we make a **life** by what we give.*

Winston Churchill



ACRA Annual Dinner

On June 6, 2019, a remarkably warm, sunny evening, 72 ACRA members and friends gathered at Roma Receptions for our annual dinner. Members began to arrive around six thirty for the usual mingling, tasting of hors d'œuvres, and some spirits at the open bar. The photographer for the evening, Peter Yaworski, made the rounds capturing snapshots of people chatting and catching up with one another.

At seven thirty, Maria Di Perna officially welcomed everyone and invited Wayne Arnold to say grace before our meal. Wayne, eloquent as usual, asked us to be grateful for our blessings and to remember our friends who could not be present.

As is customary, Jerry Dunn asked those present to participate in a half and half raffle with half the proceeds going to the St. Gabriel's Food Bank.

The staff at Roma Receptions then proceeded to serve our wonderfully prepared and delicious meal. The DJ provided some excellent dining music and it was not long before some of the guests started to dance. After our meal, the "sweet table" with an ice cream bar, fruits and assorted desserts was available for everyone to enjoy.

After more dancing and conversations amongst friends, the evening drew to a close.



21st ACRA Golf Tournament



Once again it was a perfect day for golf on the occasion of the 21st edition of our annual golf tournament. One hundred and twenty golfers were there for the shotgun start at the Belle Vue Golf Course in Léry. Our wonderful volunteers, Pat Moffa, Carol Gray, Diane Bureau, Helen Jaroslowski, and Maria Di Perna greeted everyone. Art Galardo and his team took care of the signage for the hole sponsors. Kevin Quinn, Stephanie Martin, and Al Fitzgerald managed the par 3 competitions. Karen Hebert, Kelvin Hauffman, and Joanne Hughes manned the special hole-in-one competition sponsored by Royal Lepage. A first this year, two roving ambassadors, Waguih Tabet and Eddy Gargul, circulated and provided water to the golfers and volunteers. Alexandra Di Lallo, our photographer, captured all aspects of the day. Her photos will be on our website.



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Our golfers completed their rounds and had time for pre-supper refreshments. Our eminent MC, Andy Nardoza, welcomed everyone to the supper and asked Charlie Jeannotte to lead the group in the singing of our national anthem. Sister Dianna, from St. Gabriel's, was invited to say grace. Prizes were awarded, as usual, to the top golfers of the day and to the most accurate on par 3's. Every golfer received a stainless steel ACRA water bottle as well as a door prize.



Our annual tournament was once again a huge success and St. Gabriel's Food Bank will benefit greatly. Sr. Dianna thanked everyone for all their support of St. Gabriel's Food Bank.



The tournament co-chairs, Peter Yaworski and Kevin Marciniak, in their 5th and 9th year respectively, deserve our appreciation and gratitude for their tireless efforts. During the supper, ACRA's Board of Directors recognized and paid homage to Kevin Marciniak for his selfless dedication to the golf tournament. Terry Quinn, who spoke on his behalf, enumerated the myriad of tasks that Kevin accomplishes. In his quiet and unassuming manner, Kevin works unflinchingly for months to ensure that all the pieces fall into place for a successful event, year after year. Our heartfelt appreciation, Kevin! Thank you.

We would like to thank our many sponsors and donors for their support and we look forward to next year's event!

(cont'd from page 1)

I was in Ottawa for two years from 1991 to 1993. They were to become two of the most memorable years of my life and continue to bring me joy.

Q: *What were your responsibilities as Director General?*

Among numerous other responsibilities as Director General, I was charged with executing some of the most visible aspects of the Government of Canada's policies on the Canadian Crown. This encompassed the organization and delivery of Royal Tours to Canada as well as the administration of the Lieutenant Governors' Programme.

Q: *Tell us about the first Royal Visit you organized.*

In 1991, Princess Anne, Princess Royal (daughter of Queen Elizabeth II) visited Nova Scotia and Newfoundland from July 4th to July 6th. Her itinerary in Nova Scotia included Halifax, Pictou, and Dartmouth for the Gathering of the Clans and the Black Community Centre. In Newfoundland, she visited St. John's, St. Anthony, L'Anse aux meadows, Red Bay, and Corner Brook.

When the Princess Royal was leaving for home after her visit, as is customary, all the individuals who had been involved in the visit were presented to her Royal Highness to say goodbye. Since I was the senior bureaucrat, I was the last to say the official goodbye. Her Royal Highness said to me, "This visit will have been much easier than my brother's visit will be." I looked at her Royal Highness in total confusion and actually said to her "Your brother?" She smiled and said, "My brother, Charles!" It is a wonder I was not immediately fired.

Q: *The second royal visit you organized, as Princess Anne had said, was much more challenging, I heard. Please share some of the highlights.*

In the long history of royal visits to Canada, this one may have had the most star power. In 1991, royal couple Charles and Diana made a return visit to Canada. Rumours of marital difficulty had keen-eyed royal watchers analyzing every move. Adding to the buzz, young princes William and Harry were there as well, making their first foreign visit with their parents. It all added up to a visit that was exciting for fans but a huge headache for organizers.

Prince Charles and Princess Diana had decided on two separate itineraries for their visit. This meant two sets of media buses, two sets of coordinators, two sets of motorcades, two sets of security; really two royal tours in one!



Prince Charles, Princess Diana and their two sons visited Canada from October 23rd to October 29th, 1991. All their destinations were in Ontario: Toronto, Sudbury, Niagara Falls, Kingston and Ottawa. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, sent the Royal Yacht Britannia over from England for the family to use as their home while they were in Canada. I was asked to stay with their Highnesses and the children aboard the Royal Yacht for the entire visit.

When their Highnesses were ready to leave Canada after their visit, I was once again introduced to them for the final goodbye. When I stood in front of their Highnesses, Prince Charles said to Princess Diana. "Hasn't Norma been beautifully dressed on this trip?" My clothes were borrowed from my family, and basically came from The Bay! This 1991 royal visit was the last trip to Canada that Charles and Diana would take together.

Q: *Norma, the final royal tour you organized was fit for a Queen!*

In 1992, Queen Elizabeth made a three-day visit (June 30-July 2) to Ottawa to mark the 125th anniversary of Canadian Confederation and the 40th anniversary of her accession to the Throne. On July 1, Her Majesty attended the Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill. It was also on this day in 1992 on Parliament Hill that Her Majesty unveiled The Queen Elizabeth II Equestrian

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Monument. The bronze design was created and cast by the sculptor Jack Harman. Her Majesty is represented as seated astride on the horse, Centennial – a gift to the Queen from Canada in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was the world's first equestrian statue of Her Majesty.

As part of her visit in 1992, Her Majesty also attended a reception hosted by the Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

At the end of Her Majesty's visit to Canada, when I had a private audience for the final goodbye, Her Majesty said to me, "This visit has been like fine champagne!"



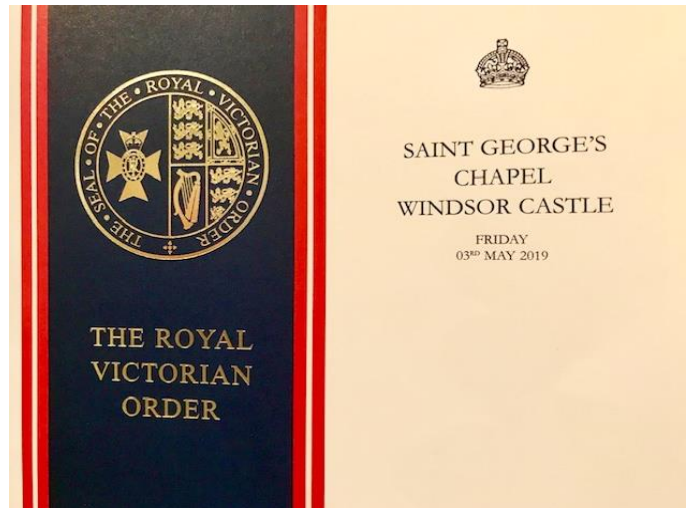
Q: As a member of the Royal Victorian Order, could you tell us about this honour?

The Royal Victorian Order is a British honour. It is given by The Queen, to people who have served her or the Monarchy personally. The Order was created in April 1896 by Queen Victoria as a way of rewarding personal service to her. Today, people receive their award either privately from The Queen or another member of the Royal Family.

The Chapel of the Order is The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy, a 'Royal peculiar', which for historic reasons is in the private possession of the Sovereign, in his or her right as the Duke of Lancaster. The Savoy Chapel is not very big, so now, the service for those who have been given the award is held every four years in Saint George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Many members of the Royal Family have been given the award, along with many other recipients including servants of The Queen, who have served the Monarchy for many years.

Q: In May of this year you were invited to attend the

service for members of the Royal Victorian Order in London, England. Please share with our readers some of the memorable moments.



On May 3rd, Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, held a service and reception for members of the RVO at Windsor Castle. On Friday we had to be ready at 8:15 am for our chartered bus to Windsor. Windsor is about an hour away from London. It was so exciting to climb the path up to the castle from where the bus dropped us off. What a sight to see the gentlemen in their morning suits and the ladies all dressed up with fascinators or hats. The castle was closed for the day for the Queen's event. Some tourists were a little disappointed. We had assigned seats in the Nave of the Chapel. The Choir section was reserved for the Queen, her family and dignitaries. Saint George's Chapel in Windsor Castle is where Harry and Megan got married. It is absolutely stunning. I could not get over the architecture, the beautifully decorated ceilings, the art and the stained glass windows. At precisely 11:00 am the bugles announced the arrival of the procession. There were uniformed guardsmen (Beefeaters) and other guardsmen with huge plumed helmets ceremoniously standing guard and others leading the procession to the Chapel. All the servers, attendants, deacons, reverends, and the magnificent all-boys choir dressed in white and red tunics led the way. Next Prince Andrew and Prince Edward walked in. Her Majesty and Princess Anne, who is the Grand Master of the Royal Victorian Order, brought up the rear. It was absolutely exciting to see the Queen so up close. The Service was over an hour long and consisted of readings and beautiful hymns and psalms sung by the Choir. At the end of the Service the entire procession came down the Nave once again and passed in front of us. Once the Service was over, we were all escorted to the state

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rooms. (There were three rooms in use to accommodate the 1000 guests). The reception was a cocktail. They served Pol Rogers champagne. I have never seen so many glasses of champagne poured and ready to go. Once we had our glass, throughout the reception, the waiters either came around with a tray to take our empty glass and give us another filled one, or there were young servers walking around with magnums of champagne refilling our glass! Champagne was overflowing!

The members of the Royal family circulated among the guests throughout the reception. I was very fortunate. I had the opportunity to speak directly to the Queen. I introduced myself and told Her Majesty that I had done her visit to Canada in 1992. I reminded her that at the end of her visit she had told me, "This visit has been like fine champagne." She smiled! Her Majesty and the other members of her family were very happy to see members from Canada attend this service. We were the largest group (30) from outside the UK. Australia was second. I also spoke to Princess Anne about her visit to Ottawa in 1991 and reminded her about the stories she told us about her children. She is so down to earth! I also had the opportunity to introduce myself to Prince Andrew and Prince Edward. I have to say that the state rooms where we were are out of this world. You do not know where to look! They are simply the most glorious state rooms I have ever seen. The ceilings are so high and they are encrusted

with gold crests and emblems. There are tapestries and large portraits of all the kings and queens on the walls and magnificent art all around. That evening was the end of the official visit to London.

I am so very grateful to have made the decision to attend this event which is only held every four years. This was my first participation. Two of the members of our RVO Canadian Association planned all the extra visits around the official event which was The Queen's Service and Reception for the all members of The Royal Victorian Order at Windsor Castle. The visits they organized for all the other days were absolutely wonderful (St. James Palace, Buckingham Palace, Canada House, Westminster Abbey, Hampton Court, the Royal Mews, and the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy) and because of who they know at the Chancery - the office that manages all the Queen's Orders - we were given entry to private areas at all the venues that the public cannot visit. Everyone at all the venues we visited, in restaurants and especially at Over-Seas House, made us feel so welcome. Because we are members of the RVO we are like part of the British family. I felt really privileged to be a member of the RVO. It was a great visit.

Well, Norma, thank you for your entertaining description of some extremely special and unique experiences. I now understand how those two years in Ottawa have come to mean so much to you.



ACRA Annual General Meeting

Thursday, September 26, 2019 11:00 am

CASA GRECQUE RESTAURANT
7218 Newman Blvd., LaSalle

