



Batshaw Alumni Association Newsletter

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A South African Adventure

By Julia Paré

Over the years I have been fortunate enough to have taken three separate road trips in South Africa.

Also, luckily, I have an adventurous cousin living in Cape Town with a car, a good map and time on her hands. We share a passion for wide open spaces, a love of untamed nature and the thrill of the unexpected, all easily available and affordable in South Africa.

Our travels have taken us from game parks to busy village markets, from rural communities to vibrant cities and from inland mountaintops to coastal regions on the Indian Ocean.

On our last trip to South Africa in 2010 my cousin and I easily agreed that we wanted to return



to a Xhosa village known as Nqileni, a remote, vibrant and beautifully traditional community, poor and under resourced, on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape.

Mud huts on rolling green hills overlooking jagged cliffs and pristine sandy beaches frequented by cows and the occasional eland, endless lagoons and forests combine to create one of South Africa's most striking beautiful vistas.

Without roads, electricity or commercial outlets, this village boasts an eco friendly back packer's lodge known as Bulungula. The creation of the lodge in early 2000, co-owned by the villagers themselves, has brought sustainable industry to the area and initiatives have begun to develop the village and the people's potential.

Having stayed there once in 2007 and benefitted from the generosity and beauty of the place, my cousin and I resolved on our return in 2010 to repay the kindness of the people by helping to enrich the lives of the villagers in the community.

We wanted to find a sustainable skill that required little start-up funds and that could be useful in this remote community with limited resources and virtually no commerce.

After much contemplation, we decide to teach the women in the village to make simple jewelry using the copious and exquisite sea shells strewn along the beaches.

The first problem we encountered was that neither of us knew how to make jewelry. However, I had the good fortune to know two women who are professional jewellery makers and who generously gave me a crash course on the basic craft, using sea shells and beads.

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A South African Adventure *Cont'd*

By Julia Paré

The second problem was that the art of creating jewelry requires the use of a drill for making miniature holes in the sea shells, but the village had no electricity other than their preciously preserved solar power for refrigeration and other essentials. After some research and much searching I found a battery operated fine drill, which the Lodge manager agreed to recharge with the solar power. It was purchased and packed along with \$300 worth of beads, clasps, twine, tools and other paraphernalia required.

Following a couple of weeks of travelling around the country by car, we turned off a secondary road for a four hour drive on neglected, pot holed and dirt roads to a rendezvous spot and a

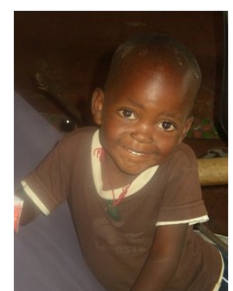
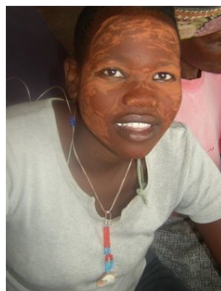


transfer to a four wheel drive vehicle, taking us on mountainous trails and passes for the last few kilometers to the Bulungula Lodge.

The women of the village had been told by the Lodge manager that we were coming and they arrived the next day, children in tow, cautious and curious to know what we had in mind and what we had in the large blue duffel bag. We hired a young man from the village who spoke some English to be our translator as we sat around the table in the Lodge's lounge.

The women were somewhat sceptical about our "no strings attached" offer to share our knowledge and supplies in order to teach them to make jewelry for their own profit, and not ours. The bag was opened, the multi-colored beads exposed, my samples circulated and the drill's function demonstrated to the delight of the women, their children and the staff and guests at the Lodge.

And thus began three, eight hour days of jewelry making! Because once the women arrived they didn't leave, nor did they want the instructors to leave. While I sat drilling shells and nodding encouragement my cousin scrambled to collect more shells from the beach.





Within a day, the jewelry makers' creativity had surpassed my own.

They made necklaces, anklets, bracelets and barrettes. They bagged them in Dollerama plastic bags, labelled them with their names and the price, hung them on



the wall in the lounge and sold them to the backpackers. By day three, their pockets were heavy with South African Rands!

We left the contents of the bag and the precious drill with the unofficial leader in the group who enthusiastically offered to protect, preserve and pursue the art of jewelry making in Nqileni.

An email from the manager six months later gave me the happy news that the women of Nqileni were still making and selling jewelry in the Bulungula Lodge.

It was an experience that we all benefitted from. Financially, the women certainly did, and hopefully they continue to do so. The globetrotting backpackers left with original African souvenirs. And the opportunity to make a difference in these women's lives left my cousin and me feeling wealthier



AGING

by Barbara Kemp

The time is here – we're getting older,

Hair retreating, age spots bolder.

Back is iffy, knees are sore,

Can't see or hear like once before.

The doctor looks and shakes his head,

He seems surprised that we aren't dead.

Ah! passion's just a dying ember,

And, what's her name? I can't remember!

But there's a truth not often told.

It's not all bad, this getting old.

The job is done, the kids are grown,

And we've got time to call our own.

To travel, read, play golf or rest.

Or volunteer – what suits us best!

There's much less tension, stress and worry,

Each day's so precious - there's no hurry.

So when youngsters look at us aghast,

We smile. God saved the best for last.



Marcel Croteau ne se repose pas sur ses lauriers !

par Marcel Coteau

À l'aube de cette 10^e année de ma retraite et de mon départ de Batshaw, j'ai le plaisir de vous dévoiler que je surveille de loin l'évolution et les développements des CJFB. En effet, au cours des dernières années, j'ai peu participé aux événements concernant les usagers et les employés (encore au travail ou à la retraite) de Batshaw, en raison, entre autres, de mes engagements auprès des membres de ma famille et de mon implication au sein de différents organismes à Richelieu ou à l'étranger.

Huguette et moi partageons des valeurs qui nous ont amené à faire des choix de vie et à prendre certains engagements. C'est ainsi que depuis plusieurs années, nous avons pris des décisions et posé des gestes en ce qui concerne la vie au sein d'une communauté, l'équité entre les personnes et les peuples et la nécessaire solidarité à l'égard des personnes moins favorisées d'ici et d'ailleurs.

Solidarité Montérégie Amérique Centrale

En effet, alors que je travaillais encore à Batshaw, mon épouse Huguette et moi, en collaboration avec quelques amis, avons créé **SMAC** (Solidarité Montérégie Amérique Centrale), un organisme



sans but lucratif oeuvrant au Guatemala. SMAC collabore étroitement avec un organisme sans but lucratif guatémaltèque, ADI (Asociacion de desarrollo integral), impliqué auprès des communautés rurales du Sud-Ouest.

Les membres de SMAC œuvrent bénévolement à sensibiliser les populations de la Montérégie aux questions de solidarité internationale, organisent diverses activités de levée de fonds pour réaliser, en collaboration avec les communautés guatémaltèques, divers projets visant la santé et un environnement sain.

Après 15 ans d'activités, SMAC a permis l'installation d'un puits, d'un réservoir et des services sanitaires dans onze écoles de petites communautés rurales; la réalisation de projets ponctuels pour contrer les impacts des cataclysmes naturels (pharmacies portatives; engrais et nouvelles semences; matériels pour l'entretien des puits et des services sanitaires, etc.). Depuis quatre ans, chaque été, un petit groupe de

stagiaires se joint à des parents guatémaltèques pour réaliser des améliorations aux écoles selon les priorités déterminées par ces dernières.

Quant à moi, après avoir assumé, durant cinq ans, la présidence de cet organisme au début de son existence et être allé en mission au Guatemala à deux reprises, je poursuis mon engagement en offrant mes services lors des délibérations du CA, dans la gestion des dons offerts à l'organisme et à la réalisation de certaines activités de levée de fonds. Il m'est très agréable d'appuyer des personnes plus jeunes et pleines d'énergie dans leur engagement à poursuivre cette belle aventure de collaboration internationale.



Paroisse Notre Dame-de-Bonsecours

Depuis plus de 7 ans maintenant, j'assume la présidence des administrateurs (le Conseil de la fabrique) de la paroisse Notre Dame-de-Bonsecours, à Richelieu. Les défis sont nombreux et fort variés, tout particulièrement en ces temps difficiles où certains de mes concitoyens ont pris des distances, parfois justifiées, à l'égard de leur Eglise et de la pratique religieuse. Cependant, plus de cent personnes continuent d'offrir leurs

services bénévolement aux membres de notre communauté. Ce travail d'équipe est exigeant, mais fort gratifiant! L'avenir reste incertain pour notre paroisse, mais cette situation nous oblige à faire appel à notre créativité et à notre détermination. C'est ainsi que nous avons offert à nos élus municipaux d'utiliser l'immeuble du presbytère (une belle grande résidence en bordure de la rivière Richelieu) et une partie des terrains de la paroisse pour y construire la nouvelle bibliothèque municipale.



Résidence Notre Dame de Richelieu

Invité en 2008 à joindre le CA d'une corporation gérant l'équivalent d'un CHSLD, la Résidence Notre Dame de Richelieu, j'y poursuis mon engagement à titre de secrétaire de la corporation. Lors de mon arrivée, un projet de rénovation et de mise aux normes du bâtiment débutait, en vue d'assurer à une population en perte d'autonomie les services et les soins que leur état requiert. Depuis déjà plus de 5 ans, cette institu-



tion accueille près de 120 résidents, des religieux de la communauté des Oblats de Marie Immaculée et de la communauté des Jésuites. Ces religieux, dont plusieurs ont œuvré comme missionnaires à l'étranger et chez les peuples autochtones du Canada, constituent une mine d'expériences fortes diversifiées au service de populations parfois laissées pour compte.

Projet de centre communautaire multifonctionnel

Enfin, en collaboration avec un ami, mon épouse et moi avons élaboré un projet de centre communautaire multifonctionnel pour notre petite municipalité. Forts de l'appui des représentants des organismes du milieu, nous avons convaincu les élus municipaux de constituer un groupe de travail en vue de poursuivre le développement de ce projet qui se voulait non seulement une opportunité pour offrir de nouveaux services à nos concitoyens, mais également une occasion de corriger certaines erreurs urbanistiques du passé. Durant près de deux années, nous avons mené différentes actions afin d'actualiser ce projet. Cependant, à notre surprise et à notre regret, ce beau projet mobilisateur, a été écarté par le

maire et certains élus municipaux, pour l'instant. Ce projet sera peut-être repris et amélioré dans l'avenir, au plus grand bénéfice de la population de Richelieu !

La vie familiale

Comme vous le constatez, les projets et les engagements ne manquent pas! Heureusement, Huguette et moi bénéficions d'une bonne santé et nous nous efforçons de garder la forme.

Nous voyageons un peu et profitons de nos voyages au pays ou à l'étranger pour faire de la marche en montagne. Et, la cerise sur le « Sunday », nos trois filles sont en bonne santé, en compagnie de leur compagnon de vie et de leurs enfants, oeuvrent dans des domaines qui les intéressent et maintiennent des liens étroits et chaleureux avec leurs « vieux » parents ! Huguette et moi sommes très heureux et nous vous en souhaitons autant !



Travel Wise

By Louise Jessop



Have you ever tried to pay for gas with your credit card in the USA only to be asked for your zip code? Of course, you don't have a zip code, you have a postal code! So, you have to schlep into the station to pay for an approximate amount of gas. Now this doesn't always happen. For some mysterious reason some gas pumps quietly accept our Canadian credit cards but in some states, forget it! I'm happy to report that there is a solution and a simple one at that. Next time you insert a credit card and you are asked for your zip code, **enter the numbers of the postal code associated with the card you are using** (billing address), **in the order in which they appear and this without the letters and add 00**. As an example, using the postal code for 6 Weredale, which is H3Z 1Y6, you

would enter 316 and add 00 (31600). This does the trick. I was very skeptical but we tried it in several states and it worked. Remember, it must be the postal code associated with the credit card you are using.

If you like to have a **cell phone** with you when you travel but don't like to pay roaming fees, you should consider buying an unlocked cell phone or having yours unlocked. Most of our underground malls have independent phone sellers, usually working out of small kiosks and selling cell phone covers etc. and many of the staff working at these will unlock your phone for a modest fee (around \$30.00). With a "local" sim card, you can buy time without a contract and make local or long distance calls and use text messaging as well. These "pay as you go" plans, in Europe for example, are quite inexpensive and allow you to call Canada for as little as 5 cents a minute. I've done it in a number of countries and it's well worth it.

Getting a **sim card** in the USA for your unlocked phone or tablet/iPad (these come unlocked) can be a challenge because providers in the USA do not accept Canadian credit cards to cover the cost of a "pay as you go" plan. You are usually required to sign up for an account, which you can cancel at any time if you don't wish to use it longer term.

The hitch is that their systems (AT&T for example) will not accept

a foreign billing address. A solution to this is to purchase a **Green Dot Visa card**. This is a card that you buy for about \$6.00 with a pre-set amount of credit on it. (Some people buy these as gift cards allowing the recipient to shop where they wish.) Registering the Green Dot Visa card using the address where you are staying enables you to then sign up with a provider, and to use the Green Dot card for payment of the mobile service that you want. It sounds a bit complicated but it is not illegal and actually works. It lets you get around network provider monopolies that blocks travellers from access to more affordable options. Green Dot cards can be purchased in drug stores, Wal-Mart, grocery stores, Radio Shack etc.

Finally, here is another vacation rental website to consider in your travels. This one will provide a range of accommodations from a couch in a private home to an entire villa. **Airbnb.com** offers solutions for all kinds of tastes. There is a charge for using their services but the wide choice of offerings has served to make this a favourite of many travellers.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me.





SANDHYA'S MEATBALL CURRY

By Sandhya Karnick

Ingredients:

- . 1 package Loblaw's frozen Angus Beef Meatballs, just the regular ones, not Italian. Defrosted
- . 1 large onion, finely chopped (or two medium)
- . 2 -3 tomatoes, finely chopped
- . 5 medium garlic cloves
- . 1 inch piece of ginger
- . 1 tsp cumin seeds
- . 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- . 1/4 tsp black mustard seeds
- . 6 black peppercorns
- . 1 inch piece of cinnamon
- . 3-4 cloves
- . 1 heaping teaspoons hot chilli powder or to taste
- . 1/4 tsp turmeric
- . 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce or vinegar (preferably malt)
- . 1 500 ml can of coconut milk
- . 2 or 3 potatoes, cut into large chunks

Directions:

Blend the ginger, garlic, and spices with the worcestershire sauce or vinegar till is a fine paste, adding water if necessary.

Heat about 1/4 cup oil. Add chopped onions and fry till light brown. Add the spice paste and fry adding a bit of water if it is sticking, about 2 minutes.

Add the chopped tomatoes and keep stirring till mashed and the oil floats on top. Add water if it starts to stick. Add the coconut milk and about 3/4 cup of water and bring to a boil, stirring a bit. Add the meatballs and potatoes, bring to a boil and turn the heat down a bit.

Cover and let it simmer for about half an hour.

Serve with boiled rice or any pilaf.

Wanted!

For the Batshaw Alumni Newsletter

Stories, poems, advice, news, event info etc. French and English

Take up your pen or sit down to your keyboard and tell us what you've been doing and what you've been thinking!

Send your articles to:

julia_pare@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Have a burger and a book!

Please join us on **Thursday June 13th at 12:00 noon**, outside, at 6 Weredale 's annual Fund-raising BBQ where the BAA will be selling used books, Cd's and Dvd to benefit the Batshaw Foundation and the BAA.

Contribution to the sale would be most appreciated. Items in good condition can be dropped off at the reception area of 6 Weredale on June 7 and 10 between 10:00am and 2:00pm, only.

Notes from the president

By Zalman Bitensky

Since my last report on September 12, 2012 a number of events and activities have taken place.

Your executive has met on 4 occasions to discuss the day to day issues of the Association and plan future events. One of these events is a fundraiser that will take the form of a 'BOOK, CD and DVD' sale at the BYFC Annual Barbeque which raises funds for Camp Weredale. Part of the proceeds from the book sale will go to the Batshaw Foundation to help children go to camp, and the rest to help fund the BAA. This newsletter and the Social Lunch were also planned by the executive.

Membership in the BAA continues to increase. By the end of

2012 we had 116 registered members. So far this year we have 5 new members which bring our total to 121. While the increase seems modest it shows there is an interest in the BAA.

Financially, we are presently solvent.

October 24, 2012, our 5th 'Fun Lunch', now called 'Social Lunch', was held. This was the best attended luncheon so far with 18 attendees. Our 6th Social Lunch held on May 22, 2013 was even better with 20 people showing up, who all seemed to have had a very good time.

Upcoming events

The next Social lunch is planned for the fall of 2013 - so stay tuned for further information.

Set aside October 1, 2013 as this is the date of our 7th 'Annual General Meeting (AGM). Besides the busi-

ness part of the meeting and refreshments there are plans to have someone talk about retirement, pensions and tax implications. This should be very informative.

I wish to thank the members of the executive who as usual have done excellent work making the BAA interesting and relevant and other members who have made an invaluable contribution to the Association.

That's all for now!

Be well
Zalman Bitensky



Annual General Meeting, September 2012



Great food! (sort of)

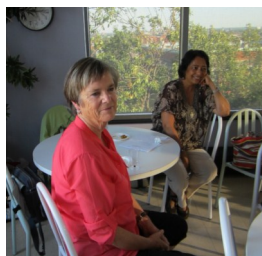


Lots of wine!

*Fantastic entertainment
by CJ Walker!*



Wonderful company!



*Don't miss the next one, on
October 1, 2013!*

Be there or be square!

