

Flora MacDonald: “The Power of One” at Work in Afghanistan



Flora MacDonald captivated a packed banquet hall at Belleville’s Ramada Inn with stories of her humanitarian (and sometimes hazardous) work in Afghanistan. Since leaving government office in 1988 she has devoted herself to the cause of international human rights. Her foundation, *Future Generations Canada*, can be found online at www.futuregen.ca

In 2001, at the age where most of us would be relaxing in our retirement, Flora MacDonald made her first trip to Afghanistan. She’s been back every year since and has visited nearly almost all of the 34 provinces in the country, from the lush valleys lying in the shadow of the Himalayas in the north to the desert country around Kabul in the south. It is a country with over three thousand years of history, a complex part of the world where its people attach great emphasis on their right to the land.

Flora’s humanitarian work focuses on things like health, cleanliness, child care, and education. Women with children will walk for miles in the winter to go to school. Standard items in her travel bag

are pens, crayons, notebooks and paper. Education is so valued that everyone, even the very young, are expected to pass on what they have learned. Chairs and desks for students can be luxuries.

Her work includes providing basic food items like grain, salt, cooking oil and sugar to a population where the average lifespan of a woman is 47 years and a man 49 years. One of the early projects was to get seeds to the people so they could grow their own vegetables. Sewing machines were made available and sewing classes are very popular. Women were given roosters and chickens to provide eggs in their family diet, something they had not

known before. Flora even talked an expatriate Afghani who was manager of a number of Ontario pizza stores to return to Afghanistan to help his people.

Flora travels around the country in a small truck with her driver and guide, Abdullah. The roads are rough and on one occasion during a night time excursion they were stopped by a band of men who beat up the driver and robbed the two other passengers of their belongings. She was not harmed, she said, possibly because of her age and being in a country where age is venerated.

As wood is the only fuel available to most people tree planting is important. They have planted 980,000 trees since she started her work there. Her yearly opera-



Flora MacDonald answers questions from the audience about Afghanistan.

tional costs plus salary for her driver amount to \$75,000. The money comes from speaking engagements and donations. Flora MacDonald is the embodiment of how one person can make a positive difference in the lives of many.

-Bill Kennedy

HCHS Annual Fall Banquet Table Sponsors

Each year businesses and individuals contribute financially to the Hastings County Historical Society's fund raising endeavors by sponsoring tables at its annual fall banquet. This year's sponsors' contributions totaled over \$4,000. To them the Society extends its sincere appreciation. Their assistance gives a big boost to our ongoing efforts in pursuit of archives excellence for Hastings County.

Mr. Allan Woodley
Allan's Auto Repair
112 Station Street
Belleville, ON
K8N 2S5
(Table 1)



**Mr. Todd Foster, Mr. Tom
Gunsinger, Ms. Michelle Stephens**
Bel-Con Construction
10 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON
K8P 1A1
(Table 2)

Mr. & Mrs. Gerry Boyce
Belleville, ON
K8N 1N3
Bev & Gerry Boyce Attending
(Table 12)

Mr. Eric Thompson
**Burke Funeral
Home**
150 Church Street
Belleville, ON
K8N 3B9
(Table 4)



Mr. Garry Foster
Campbell Monuments Co. Ltd.
Box 487
712 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON
K8N 5B2
(Table 5)

Mr. John Stockton
CIBC Wood Gundy
199 Front Street
Belleville, ON
K8N 5H5
Tammy & John Stockton Attending
(Table 9)

Mr. David Denison
Coldwell Banker Ekort Realty
100 Bell Boulevard
Belleville, ON
K8P 4Y7
(Table 6)

Mr. David Cooney
Howard Cooney Auto Sales Inc
101 Front Street
Belleville, ON
K8N 2Y6
(Table 7)



Mr. Eric DenOuden
Hilden Homes
393 Sidney Street
Belleville ON
K8P 3Z9
(Table 8)

Mr. Jim Langille
Investia Financial Services
65 Station Street
Belleville, ON
K8N 2S6
Jim Langille & Friends Attending
(Table 3)

Mr. John Thomas
**Jones Deslauriers Management
Insurance Inc.**
888 Sidney Street North
Belleville, ON K8N 4Z7
(Table 10)

Mr. Allan Kelly
Kelly's Home Health Centre
411 Bridge Street East
Belleville, ON
K8N 1P7
(Table 7)

Ross McDougall
**McDougall Insurance &
 Financial**
 199 Front Street
 Belleville, ON
 K8N 5H5
 (Table 13)

Mr. Maurice Rollins
Rollins Investments
 199 Front Street
 Belleville, ON
 K8N 5H5
 (Table 14)

Ms Golda Lafferty
TD Canada Trust
 202 Front Street
 Belleville, ON
 (Table 11)

Mr. William Proctor
Barrister & Solicitor
 365 North Front Street
 Belleville, ON
 K8P 5A5
 (Table 15)

Mr. Ian Sullivan
Templeman, Menninga LLP
 200-205 Dundas Street East
 Belleville, ON
 K8N 5K6
 (Table 16)

Mr. Dan Atkinson
Welch & Company
 Chartered Accountants
 525 Dundas Street East
 Belleville, ON
 K8N 1G4
 (Table 17)

Mr. John Wilson
 39 Milford Crescent
 London, ON
 N5X 1A9
 (Table 2)





Photos

- Page 1 Flora MacDonald and banquet guests
 Page 1 Flora MacDonald
 Page 2 Flora MacDonald
 Page 3 Flora MacDonald and Society President Orland French.
 Piper Hugh Jack.
 Sylvia French introducing Flora MacDonald.
 Lee Jourard, Master of Ceremonies.
 Banquet Guests.
 Bill Hunt introduces the sponsors.
 Dick Hughes, Society Vice-President, toasts the Queen and Canada.
 Nick White, one of our two photographers caught in front of the lens.
 Banquet Guests.
 Town Crier, Bruce Beddell.
 Page 4 Piper Hugh Jack and President French hoist a wee dram "*Slainte! Uisge Beatha!*"
 Flora MacDonald and Councillor Garnet Thompson.
 Diane Sule and Lois Foster accept a gift on behalf of the Heritage Centre Archive Angel volunteers.
 The 4 x 6 inch Christmas card is from the archives, circa 1900. It has five pages that include quotes from Geoffrey Chaucer and John Milton.



Merry Christmas
 and Happy New
 Year to all our
 Members and
 Sponsors!

The Society would like to extend a special "Thank You" to Bill Hunt who worked hard to round up many of the table sponsors named in this issue.

All Photos in this *Outlook* are courtesy of Doug Knutson & Nick White

HCHS MEMBER ADDRESS