



# St. Catharines Torch Club

## April 2014 Newsletter

### Alexandra Fic

Alexandra has a B. A. in political science and history, and a Bachelor of Teaching. Her post-graduate degree is in International Law and International Relations.

She taught in India, at Nanyang University in Singapore, and for a short stint at Burapha University in Chonburi, Thailand. In Canada, she was a professor at Niagara College for 21 years, teaching and co-ordinating the General Arts and Sciences program, and for ten years at Brock University, teaching political science, entrepreneurship from a global perspective, and the role of women in building the economies of developing countries.

Publications include writing and publishing food columns in Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Thailand; and in Canada, Weekend Magazine and Chate-laine; numerous articles, newspaper columns and conference papers in Canada and abroad; two works on Buddhism; and a first-prize winning children's storybook which is now part of UNESCO's program for literacy for children in developing countries.

At the request of the Ministers of Education of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries, she was seconded to the Sultanate of Brunei, by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), to assist the Ministry of Education in developing curriculum for skills training programs for women.

This was followed by an appointment by the United Nations in consultation with CIDA, as CTA (Chief Technical Advisor) to the national governments of six of the ten ASEAN countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei, The Philippines, and Malaysia) simultaneously, to develop and set up skills training and income generation programs for poverty alleviation for women in rural areas, according to the needs and culture of each country.

Brock University recognized her contribution and work for the welfare of women by awarding her the Rosalind Hyman Blauer award. This award reads: "**This award is presented to an outstanding member of the Brock community, who is engaged in activities that illuminate, research and bring attention to, or that improve the position of women in contemporary society.**"

Also she was inducted into the Princeton Global Network Directory of Who is Who. It reads: "**This recognition is bestowed upon only the most distinguished individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to excel in their career and exemplary leadership within their Community.**"

In August 2007, by Order-in-Council, she was appointed by the Governor General of Canada, Chair of the Board of Referees for Niagara, for a three year term.

The mandate of the board is to adjudicate Employment Insurance claims, according to the Employment Insurance Act.

Alexandra has also served on various boards, and as president of the India-Canada Association in Niagara. She is a volunteer at the Niagara Ina Grafton Gage Village.

### Next Meeting

- Thursday April 10, 6 pm social hour, 7 pm dinner.
- Best Western, St. Catharines.
- **Dinner: Family style:** Tossed green salad, beer batter fish and chips with trimmings, fresh vegetable medley, English trifle, tea/coffee.
- Cost: \$25.
- **Speaker:** Alexandra Fic.
- **Topic:** 1947: Partition of India.
- Please let your phone captain know whether you are coming.
- If you require a special meal, please contact Alexandra Fic or Merle Richards.
- If you need a ride, contact David Warren at 905-934-9765.

## 1947: Partition of India

Beginning with a brief overview of India today, as a secular democracy, the presentation will outline the advent of Islam in India both by trade and military conquests, and of the British, starting with the East India Company in 1600, but eventually a colonial power, which colonized the country from 1757 until 1947.

In 1857, an India-wide mutiny against the British, under the command of Queen Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, which was suppressed by the British forces, was the beginning of the resistance to the British occupation of India. It led to the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, and the Muslim League in 1906.

During the First World War, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, and launched his Non-Violent Civil Disobedience Movement, demanding an independent India, starting with Home Rule. In 1919,

Nehru joined the All India Congress, and in 1913 Muhammed Ali Jinnah assumed leadership of the Muslim League. The British responded by enacting two Government of India Acts, in 1919 and 1935, which gave India some say in the administration of the country. However, India would not settle for anything less than for the British to withdraw completely, and continued to press for it.

It was only at the end of World War II, when the Labour Party came to power in England, under Clement Atlee as Prime Minister, that the British conceded, and agreed to withdraw from India no later than 1948. India became independent on August 15, 1947, but only after the creation of the Islamic republic of Pakistan on August 14, 1947

## March 19th Meeting (Postponed from March 12 Due to Weather)

**Attendance:** 31

**Meeting called to order by:** Dave Sydor

**Toast and Grace:** Leslie Thornburn

### **Business Notes:**

Ivan Hrabowsky reminded everyone about the expectation of attendance and help for the June conference. The ability to come for Saturday only with a reduced rate is being considered seriously. Helpers are needed for specific tours.

### **Speaker:** Dr. David Dean

Dr. David Dean was introduced by John Northover, who described his training and practice of cardiology and cardiac rehabilitation. Even as an octogenarian, Dr. Dean still works at the Buffalo General Hospital examining 200 ECG charts in an afternoon.

Dr. Dean spoke on the current state of health care and the attempts to improve it with the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. The major goal of this legislation is to insure the fifty million Americans who presently do not have health insurance. This group is too rich for Medicaid, too young for Medicare and not rich enough to afford private insurance. The need for

this initiative was prompted by the fact that life expectancy in the US is lower than in many other countries, including Cuba. Infant mortality is higher in the US than in many European countries, despite an annual average health care cost per person of \$7,437 in the US compared with \$3,844 in Canada.

Dr. Dean gave a very detailed PowerPoint presentation illustrating the complexity of the health care insurance debate in the US. It involves young healthy patients, doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies, all of which are influenced by polarizing political views. Dr. Dean favours a much simpler single payer plan, but he did not elaborate.

Anne Elliott moderated the interesting exchange of question and answers.

**Thanks to Speaker:** Abraham Remple

**Final Joke:** Leslie Thornburn

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, April 10th