

RCA Newsletter

Rwanda Convention 2009

MONTREAL May 15th to May 18th 2009

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

MAY 2009



RCA YOUTH PROGRAM

RCA sixth annual Rwanda convention in Montréal will be the platform to the ever first Diaspora Youth Program. While we always include important workshops related to business and the Diaspora, at this year's convention, we would like to take time and also focus specifically on our youth. As future leaders of our country, both at home and abroad, RCA Youth Program will provide a platform for Rwandan youth to gain information on leadership skills and career/goal orientation.

During the preparation for this project, the youth program team selected three areas and topics we wanted to make sure were covered during this workshop. The team identified several objectives and goals we want accomplished within this workshop, and ensuing discussions.

These topics include professional, social and cultural issues concerning the youth in the Rwandan Diaspora.

With this in mind, the workshop has been divided into three parts. There will be two career advisors from Concordia University speaking during the Youth Workshop on resume and job searching skills, building leadership within the Rwandan youth, as well as, tips for international students wishing to find work in North America. Next, we will cover ways to open the lines of communication between those of us in the Diaspora and the youth in Rwanda, so as to feel more connected as a people and not several isolated communities. Finally, and perhaps most important, there will be debate on a vision for Rwanda, and thoughts and ideas on taking the country to new heights.

In the end, the goal of this program is to not only raise awareness for our association, but to create a platform for discussion on all things geared towards the progress of Rwanda. As potential leaders, a sense of ownership of Rwanda's future needs to be adopted. Therefore, a critical dialogue regarding these youth matters is encouraged,

not only at the workshop but in the weeks leading to the convention, as well as the period following.

So feel free to contact us at our facebook group or by email, at youthprogram@rwandaconvention.org.

We look forward to seeing you all in Montréal.

RCA Youth Officers:

Roger Rushemeza

Teddy Mugabo

Rita Umulisa

Charles Desmarais

RDB Tourism & Conservation

Kwita Izina



Kwita Izina

Kwita Izina is Rwanda's annual baby gorilla naming ceremony - held to celebrate each new birth in a natural habitat, and also to raise awareness and applaud everyone involved in the preservation of these beautiful and fascinating creatures

its lush, green primeval forests, situated on the edge of the Great Rift Valley, between the Nile and the Congo, and home to a volcanic national park, Rwanda is Africa at its most dramatic and majestic. An increasingly popular eco-tourism destination, it is best known for its primates: giraffes, zebras and lions populate the hills and plains, and some 275 species of bird twitter through the trees. But it is gorillas for which Rwanda is most famous. Rwandan mountain gorillas are among the world's most endangered – and beloved – species. With fewer than 750 gorillas living in the misty wilds of the country's Virunga ranges, time is

charming African city, with memorials to the Rwandan genocide a key attraction. A growing business centre, Kigali offers a range of hotels for all budgets and a fine assortment of restaurants, many reflecting the country's historical links with Belgium.

Where else but Rwanda can you enjoy the trip of a lifetime while helping to save an endangered species from extinction?

For more information visit rwandatourism.com

Rwandatourism.com
Tel: +250 576514 or 573396
Email: info@rwandatourism.com

running out in the mission to preserve these fiercely intelligent and utterly captivating mammals. This is why four years ago – in 2005 – the Rwanda Tourism and National Parks office publicly launched an annual Gorilla Naming Ceremony, known as Kwita Izina, reviving a centuriesold tradition. The aims of the ceremony are varied: to celebrate each gorilla that was born in its natural habitat in the course of the year, to laud the efforts of everyone involved in gorilla preservation and, crucially, to raise awareness of the plight of the gorillas to the wider public. An exciting result of the launching of Kwita Izina is that, by celebrating the success of conservation, it has brought Rwanda to the attention of an ever-growing number of environmentally conscious and animal-loving tourists. Another positive outcome has been the reduction in illegal practices such as poaching. Kwita Izina is now a key fixture in Rwanda's annual calendar, attracting thousands of people to the foot of the Virunga Mountains, with certain special VIP guests in attendance each year. Among the grantees to have attended are Rwanda's own President Kagame and his wife, who launched it; actress Natalie Portman; renowned US conservationist Jack Hanna; and representatives from "Crocodile Man" Steve Irwin's family.

rwandatourism.com

Tel: +250 576514 or 573396

Email: info@rwandatourism.com

Since 2005, 84 baby gorillas have been named; and this year 11 more will be honoured with a name. The event has also had a very positive impact on the community, with locals becoming more involved each year in the preparations for the event. These include dancing and a roast the night before. The Rwanda Tourism and National Parks office has used the event to raise both awareness and revenue, to ensure the financing of future initiatives to protect the gorillas. The ultimate aim is, of course, for gorillas to be struck off the list of the world's endangered species.

One source of revenue has been the gorilla adoption programme, offering people the opportunity to forge an intimate bond with a particular gorilla, and in so doing to secure its financial future.

A trip to Rwanda is a wonderful way to combine a passion for gorillas and their welfare with the holiday of a lifetime in a setting of unspoilt natural beauty. With mountains, lakes and an abundance of wildlife, there is so much to choose from.

Featuring on most itineraries is a trip to Lake Kivu, Rwanda's largest lake where fishermen ply the waters in dugout canoes as flotillas of pelicans glide past on the open water.

The Nyungwe National Park is another must-visit place, celebrated for its diverse flora and fauna, including acrobatic arboreal monkeys, chimpanzees, baboons and iridescent sunbirds. It is Rwanda's top birding site.

The Parc National des Volcans (Volcanic Park) was beloved of the famous primatologist Diane Fossey. Its volcanoes tower 15,000 feet and are surrounded by the rich, green rainforest of the Virungas – home of the mountain gorillas. This area is also inhabited by chattering golden monkeys, buffaloes and elephants.

Mountain-biking and fishing are other pursuits that can be enjoyed in Rwanda,

and the capital of Kigali is not to be missed. French- and English-speaking bus

tours can help you get to know this



“Have you ever studied any law?”

--by Burl Waits 2-15-09

In 1961, I was a California high school dropout with a couple of near death experiences in the Korean War.

Nine years prior, I had been discharged from the Marines Corps, married my high school girl friend, and spent a year studying refrigeration and air conditioning at the Milwaukee School of Engineering in Wisconsin where students dreamed that someday automobiles would have air conditioning.

Returning to California in 1954 after one year because my wife did not want a child born outside California, I went to work as a laborer at the newly opened Procter & Gamble Soap Manufacturing Plant in Sacramento. By 1961, I was President of the local employees' union. During contract negotiations I had challenged the company on certain provisions of an arbitration clause.

Two years after the contract was signed the company refused to arbitration a grievance.

Our union team filed a lawsuit to force arbitration. The team had spent a couple hours with our union attorney preparing for the first court hearing. As our group walked out of the attorney's office, the lawyer turned to me and said,

“Burl, when you negotiated that contract you really had the issue figured out.”

I passed the required law school qualification test the next year. I applied for night school classes at McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento. I was working a three shift job that rotated shifts every two weeks. My co-workers and the company allowed me to change my evening second shifts to over-night third shifts.

I was alternating two weeks on day shift and four week night shifts for 40 hours a week while my wife and I were raising our four young children. Arriving home at 7:00 AM after a night shift I would sleep a few hours and then study law while the neighborhood kids used our yard as a central park.

The first year of law school was hard. One hundred fifty students entered the first year of a four-year program. Students surviving the first year were required to take another exam to continue studies. Only fifty-four members of the class started the second year. One of my night school law professors was Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy. In 1966, twenty-six of us graduated and twenty-three of us passed the California State Bar examination on the first attempt. My total cost to attend law school was less than \$4,000. Today McGeorge School of Law is among the best law schools in California, offers day and evening programs, and is affiliated with the University of the Pacific.

Graduating from law school in 1966 at age 36 and thinking I was too old to work for anyone else, my wife Joan and I opened a small law office. In time, we grew the firm to include five attorneys and I developed particular expertise in estate planning.

“Have you ever studied any law?” This simple question changed the entire course of my life. My thanks to attorney Patrick McCarthy for asking.

In 1987, another transcendence experience caused me to focus my life purpose on understanding the education system. But, that is another story.





KIGALI PUBLIC FUND LIBRARY

By
Zachary Kaufman

KPL (Kigali Public Library), a project of Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga (RC of KV), to build first ever Public Library in Rwanda, was started in the year 2000, the Chartered year of the RC of KV.

It was an ambitious project at a cost, with an initial estimate of US\$ 1.7 Mil. which was to be done wholly through Fund raising.

The First fundraising was done at the residence of then US Ambassador to Rwanda, George Staples, with HE Paul Kagame, the President of Republic of Rwanda, as Guest of Honor. This first ever fundraising for the KPL, collected about \$250,000 in cash and Kind. The 'Ground Breaking' - Foundation laying ceremony, was held at a site donated by the Government of Rwanda, on May 11, 2001.

Subsequently the funds raised through the efforts of RC of KV and American friends of Kigali Public Library (AFKPL) could muster a total of about \$850,000 including the funds of \$500,000 donated by GoR.

The building cost over-run had hampered the progress and the contractor, after five years of slow construction (due to paucity of funds) demanded a cost escalation of over \$1 Mil. and revised an estimate of over \$2.3 MI further funds requirement.

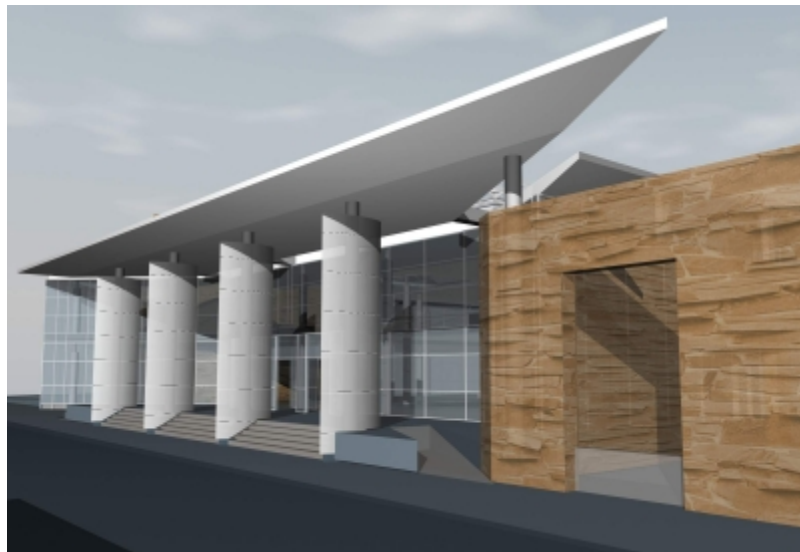
This has ended in termination of contract and appointment of a new contractor.

Further RC of KV raised about \$320,000 through another fundraising in 2007, with the First Lady of Rwanda, Mme. Jennette Kagame as Guest of Honor. This money was paid to the new contractors as an Advance for Construction, to make a progress in the building construction which has seen the roof on the top of the building. As the Club could not raise any more significant amount of money to complete the construction, the GoR came to the rescue and taken over the task of completing the building.

Currently the work is yet to be resumed as the Funds from the Budgets of GoR to be allocated for the Building. We expect that GoR will do that soon, to complete the building, to make the Library operational by early 2010.

Meanwhile, Zachary Kaufman, the Founder, President, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the AFKPL, and Dr. Phil Clark have pledged to donate to KPL the profits from the sale of *After Genocide* (www.aftergenocide.com), a book they have co-edited and co-authored on post-genocide Rwanda. The book will be launched in Kigali on 3 April 2009

<http://www.kigalilibrary.org/>



Dear Members,

Its with great pleasure that we welcome you all to our sixth annual Rwanda Convention in Montreal, Quebec City on May 15th to May 17th. RCA in 2008 has shifted from a community based organization to a non-profit organization that is dedicated in promoting socio-economic development in Rwanda , as well as, Rwandan Diaspora networking to enhance our Rwandan communities and educate our US/Canadian communities about Rwanda.

Through Education projects and initiatives, business investment, youth leadership, and encouraging Diaspora to be more active in our communities, RCA believes that Urwanda Rw'ejo (Tomorrow's Rwanda) can reach its Vision 2020 goals. 2009 marks a new and evolving year for RCA. We have entered new collaborative alliances with RDB Tourism and Conservation to promote Tourism in Rwanda and allow our members access to promotional touristic packages offered by RDB.

RCA has furthered strengthened its organization by aligning with Transitional Trade, a non-profit dedicated in promoting investment in post-conflict nations. The alliance will allow businesses and foreign investors concrete data on profits, as well as, areas of investment in Rwanda. While RCA will provide the networking environment, and bridge to entities based in Rwanda. Transitional Trade will strengthen the economic benefits through data and research both for Rwanda and the investing business entity.

Youth Leadership in our Diaspora community is of great importance. As we think of Tomorrow's Rwanda, our youth are our future leaders. At this year's Rwanda Convention we will host the first youth program in collaboration with Concordia University. While they will focus on both leadership building and career orientation, the youth program will also be a platform for the youth to discuss issues pertaining to Rwanda and our Diaspora communities.

The vision for 2009 Rwanda Convention is to aid in Rwandan networking, promote business investment by Rwandans and foreign investors, promote education projects in Rwanda, build youth leadership, and most importantly Diaspora networking.

On behalf of the RCA Team we welcome you all to our sixth annual Rwanda Convention and look forward to seeing you all in Montreal.

Sincerely,

Urusaro Bakuramutsa, President
www.rwandaconvention.org



Anne-lise Kankindi
Public Relations Director



Mutoni Karasanyi
Education Director



Urujeni Bakuramutsa
Treasurer



Carol Rugege
Head of Protocol and Planning