

# Rotary continues to serve in Cameroon

by Peter Smith, Baddeck and Past District Governor, Rotary Club

I have been travelling to Cameroon to work on District 7820 sponsored projects since 2003. I return every two years



A student from the National Comprehensive School, Limbe, Cameroon, disembarking from one of the new donated buses.

and bring back pictures of the work our district has completed. This goes a long way to keep our Rotarians motivated to continue these humanitarian projects through Foundation grants and donations.

Thirty four hospitals have been re-equipped with our Canadian hospital and medical equipment. Mothers now give birth on modern birthing beds, retina tears and detachments are repaired with modern laser units, doctors perform



Pete Smith is pictured handing out school texts to the various primary schools. HRM the Fon is to the right.

surgery on new operating tables and the list goes on. Several schools now have computer labs, libraries and now two 72 passenger school buses which were delivered this year. These are the only school

buses of this calibre in Cameroon, and are shared amongst the schools for their first ever school trips and sports events.

Were the school buses a luxury? When a child has to walk several hours a day just to get back and forth to receive an education, I don't think so. This month I returned from my fifth mission to Cameroon for the handover of the two new buses, build latrines and supply school books to Awing, a remote tribal Christian village. Awing, with an estimated population of 30,000, rests in a lush fertile valley where leopards and lions once roamed. They receive little in the way of help from the Government but they are very self sufficient in the administration of their village. Every village member, no matter if you live in the USA or Canada, is responsible for the upkeep



A second latrine in the background with Awing students and officials in background. Still work to be done on a most valuable piece of infrastructure.

of their village. The valley yields coffee, pineapple, potatoes, coconut, bananas, carrots and much more and is primarily an agricultural area. In the hills livestock are raised by the Muslim sector. Trading takes place between the two and assistance is freely given when needed. They co-exist in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation.

During my stay, seven Primary schools received State approved school books, not enough for each student, but sharing is part of their life. Each book will be studied by five students with one selected to look after the precious Rotary gift. Unfortunately there was only sufficient funds available to build two latrines. These were constructed with cinder block made on site, large pit, cement pad, roof

and not to forget, a wash station. The latrines were built with privacy for the teachers, girls and boys. This was new to them, and their smiles were thank enough.

While in the village I was called to the Tribal Palace by His Royal Majesty, the Fon of the village. He was sitting between two huge ivory tusks and many leopard skins and I was humbled to receive the honor of being named a Chief in the Awing Tribe, given the title of Mbah-Ntiangnte. Roughly translated as meaning a Chief-Organizer. The appropriate dress and hat were given to commemorate the occasion along with a

special recognition of a red feather worn in the hat which depicts someone who has hunted a leopard or lion or has done something very special in the village. I preferred the latter.



PDG Pete Smith being inducted into the Awing Tribe by His Majesty the Fon.

Prior to leaving Awing I always organize a few Polio immunizations, which is always a touching experience. I was pleased to see a Rotary plaque on their small health clinic wall noting the hospital equipment District 7820 had shipped over in 2007. It was no small feat to deliver the hospital beds to Awing which is seven hours over very rough roads from the port of Douala.

## Fear of arson puts community on edge

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operational capabilities of the RCMP's Victoria County District. The additional officer would cost the Municipality \$128,000.

The second option is to redeploy one existing officer within Victoria County from Ingonish Beach detachment to the Baddeck detachment which met with icy opposition from the councillors North of Smokey.

The 3rd option suggested is to maintain the status quo with existing resource levels.

The status quo leaves little hope for the residents who recognize there has been no success in stopping the arson so far and the RCMP report that all fires had been investigated and it is difficult to solve the crime of arson.

One suggestion put forward was that an RCMP detachment or officer be stationed in Bay St. Lawrence. This approach was attempted a few years ago

and resulted in rifle shots being fired at the proposed police station. Two officers are now located in Dingwall.

This lawlessness is not only dangerously malicious it is extremely stressful for the law abiding citizens.

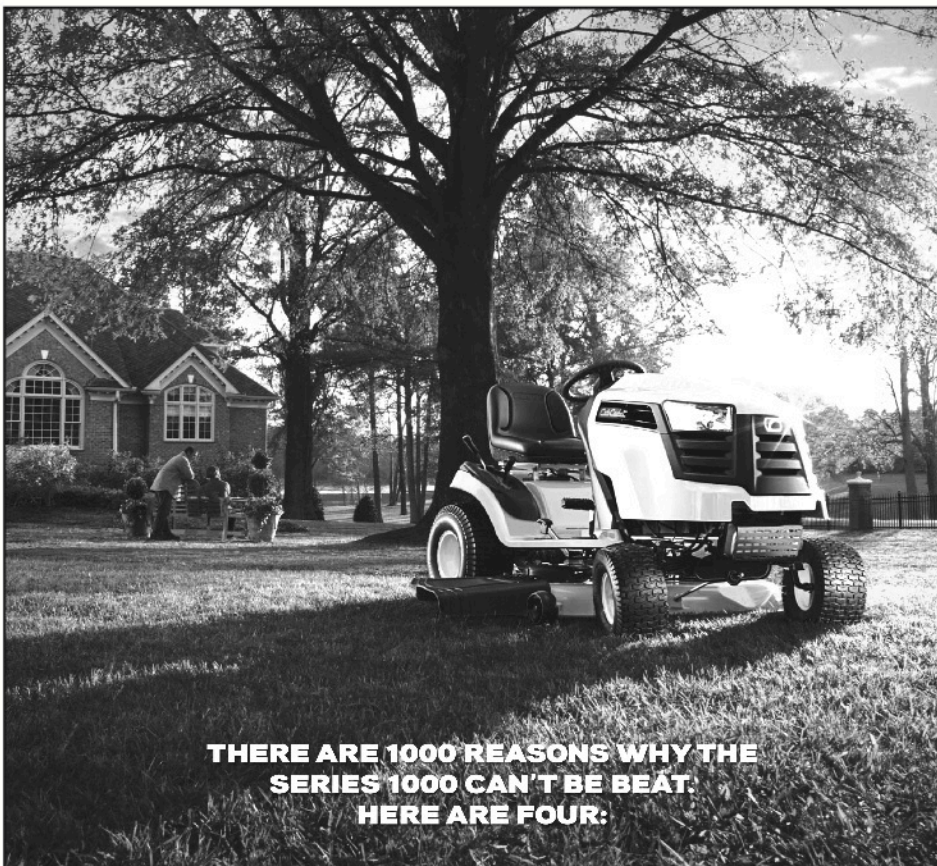
Some residents saw the underlying causes of the crimes to be drug and alcohol related. It was suggested that a crack down on these offences would help solve others.

Others felt that the legal system only gives a "slap on the wrist" to offenders and when the criminals return to the community vengeance crimes occur.

Police are stymied until hard evidence turns up or until someone comes forward with information.

Fear of reprisals makes this a very unlikely option.

Victoria County paid \$1,220,152 for RCMP services in the fiscal year 2010-2011.



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**Elizabeth (Betty) Menzies**  
B.A., B.Ed.  
Sales Associate  
Residence: (902) 295-2922  
betty@harveyrealties.com



**Cheryl MacDonald**  
Sales Associate  
Residence: (902) 929-2278  
cheryl@harveyrealties.com



**Terri Brewer**  
Sales Associate  
Residence: (902) 295-3472  
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