

Dear Michigan Rotarians,

I remember as a boy standing for the first time on the bank of Mazarne Creek where we had our local swimming hole. The sun was shining in my eyes, reflecting golden off the dark water and I hugged my skinny ribs in excitement and anticipation of jumping in feet first. I hit the surface with a splash and began sinking and sinking for what seemed a very long time. At just the moment when I began to wonder if there was a bottom to this creek and if my frantic kicking would be enough to bring me back up from the cold depths, I began to rise and, after a lung-burning eternity, I broke surface, letting the current take me downstream while I caught my breath and thanked my lucky stars. After a bit I started a lopsided dog paddle and eventually felt master of the situation.

The time spent this summer visiting various Rotary clubs with Mr. Dimond and meeting so many wonderful Rotarians was my “standing on the shore” time. I can still remember how enjoyable it was to meet some many of you and how excited I was to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this fellowship. Well, I jumped in with a splash on August 30 and am finally feeling like I have broken surface. The water can be cold and deep at a foreign institution of this stature, and the currents are strong, but I’m beginning to catch my breath and kick, albeit somewhat weakly.

The studies at Sciences Po, Paris are challenging and being here offers so many wonderful opportunities for growth. For example, in my classes and during the course of extra-curricular activities, I meet students from all over the world who are all articulate, well-educated, and come with intriguing insights and perspectives. It’s almost as if I have been given the chance to study in 50-60 different countries. Additionally, the proximity of UNESCO headquarters has already offered the opportunity to attend conferences and rub shoulders with people who make the decisions that impact the world. But of all the many benefits I enjoy most from being here is the association with the other scholars. I can’t imagine a similar group in all the world that is composed of so many experienced, intelligent, sincere people seeking to improve the world. They are very edifying to be around.

And I couldn’t write a letter to you all without giving you news about my wife, Carolyn. She is finding life in France just as challenging as I, but she is making her own way through the challenges. She has begun French classes at the Alliance Française and has become quite fearless at navigating the Paris metro system. Her integration has been greatly facilitated thanks to the wife of my Rotary host counselor and the members of the local congregation of our church.

Well, I guess it’s time I moved on to other things. I have a paper and a presentation due next week, so I need to return to them. Thank you once again for this opportunity. I am trying to make the most of it.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Brian J. Adams  
Paris, France  
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