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ROMANIA

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Digging for Gold and Truth in a New Democracy

By Cristina Merrill

MARCH 31, 2006

BUCHAREST, Romania – Being a fly on the wall at a recent meeting of interest to me, and ostensibly of greater value to Romania, has given me great joy. Some people get drunk on money and power, whereas I get butterflies just from access to information, riveting people and truth. I suppose I get to be a happily drunk reporter when stakes are raised by the presence of money and power as part of the story.

This was just that kind of event, but only a tiny piece of a nine-year saga that has been going on in Romania: A Canadian mining firm spending fabulous sums of money, in expectation of getting final approval to extract fabulous amounts of gold, and which encounters tough opposition from a fiery community coalition. A ho-hum occurrence in other countries, you might say, but quite extraordinary considering that Romania is just learning to adapt to a market economy and foreign investment, and is barely familiar with community activism — unless we are talking about soccer riotousness.

The event I attended took place in Bucharest, at the headquarters of the National Audiovisual Council, where board members met to discuss the merits of complaints filed by opponents of a high-profile advertising campaign launched late last year by the Canadians. The underlying topic, however, was the Rosia Montana (“Red Mountain”) mining project in an area more than a seven-hour drive away, in western Transylvania. It’s in a historic mining district known as the Golden Quadrilateral and in a geographic region known to miners as the Carpathian Arc, often likened to the Pacific Rim’s “Ring of Fire.” This area has been one of Europe’s most prolific mining districts for over 2,000 years. Roman occupiers were the first miners in this region, until about the end of the third century. Then Austro — Hungarians (from the end of the 17th century until 1918). Mining also took place between the two world wars and of course during Communism. The last state-owned mine there will cease operations this fall.

The Canadian firm, Toronto-based Gabriel Resources, which operates in Romania under the name Rosia Montana Gold Corp., first came here in 1997, drawn by the prospect of taking possession of some 10.6 million ounces of gold and 52.3 million ounces of silver reserves, considered one of the ten largest undeveloped resources in the world. The Romanian subsidiary is 80 percent Canadian-owned, and the rest state-owned. The gold mine would also be one of the largest in Europe. In a meeting with analysts in December, Alan H. Hill, Gabriel’s president and CEO and an experienced miner himself, having been the executive director for development of another mining Canadian firm, Barrick Gold, called Rosia Montana a “world-class resource” and “a vanilla mine.” By that he meant that it’s the kind of mine that doesn’t require sophisticated processing. “It’s a plain and simple northern Canadian type of mine, where you mine it, crush it, mill it and leach it. Then you place the leached rock into a tailings pond,” he said.

But the road to vanilla has been anything but plain. The Canadians have



vately, was entrusting leadership in the early days of post-Communism to Romanians more skilled in manipulating often-corrupt central planning than operating in a free-market economy.

The company says it learned from the mistakes and now has a spotless and tight-knit management. Last May it hired Mr. Hill, an executive with 40 years' experience in mining. Mr. Hill has since brought to Romania what he says are top engineers and experts in the field (and his most trusted mates from his previous employment). Last month they signed on a board member who is a veteran of the mining industry and who can help them with

learned that accomplishing anything in post-Communist countries is a long and torturous process, and that any meeting between East and West must first be tested in the Balkan crucible. Of course, the fact that they eventually stand to produce 350 tons of gold and silver of very good grade, has fed Canadians' dogged patience. If gold prices stay high at \$500 per ounce, shareholders will make back their investments in less than four years, and since they plan to operate in Romania for 17 years, the profit on the Romanian investment would be significant.

Disclosure: Recently, an attempt has been made to recruit this correspondent to work in the communications department of the Canadian firm. For years, this firm invested in everything but spin and lately they decided that they needed smart public relations in order to fight the deluge from a growing and increasingly damaging opposition. The firm has hired a PR agency and was looking for an in-house member to coordinate internal and external communications. Because this now is arguably the most explosive issue in Romania, this reporter was at first put off by the offer. "No way," my initial response was, "this is just about the last company I would consider working for." The headhunter told me that mine was the typical reaction. Because of the bad press, Canadians are having a very hard time hiring local help for their project. On the other hand, the more I learned about the issues, the more intrigued I became with the company and the overall story, including the implications it has for this country as it moves forward.

Trouble from the Start – Capitalist Intentions Gone Bad

The Canadians' presence here has been marked by turmoil. For one, the management both in Canada and at the Romanian subsidiary has changed several times, often because of scandals. Their mistake, as officials say pri-

the financing they will need for the production phase, should they get the government's green light to proceed. Once and if the environmental hurdle is over, the mining firm will need to move fast to raise at least \$700 million to finance the development of Rosia Montana. The last step before approval is an environmental impact-assessment report that will explain their plans to deal with any damage that might arise from mine operations. Following a period of about six months of public comments, the government will either approve or reject the project. If the ruling favors mining, the Canadians will start working right away; if the ruling comes too late in the fall, when weather worsens, mining will have to wait until early 2007. The first pouring of gold, and profit for Canadians, is expected to take place in early 2009.

One of the biggest problems Gabriel faces is one of image. Many Romanians still associate Gabriel with the project's early management and know little, or don't want to know, about the new managers installed last May. The press, fueled by a zealous community-activist campaign, has been mostly negative. Media here are still basically reactionary, struggling to learn to be democratic and free of interest-conflicts. Some of the most negative press, for example, has come from two papers that in the past have tried and failed to sell ad space to Gabriel.

The other issue working against the Canadians is Romanians' lingering Communist mentality of distrust toward foreigners, especially outside investors ("we don't sell our country," type of argument). As recently as the fall of 2004, now-former Prime Minister Adrian Nastase declared himself opposed to the project, commenting that foreigners like Gabriel Resources "will take the gold and leave the cyanide." But political winds have shifted since, with a new government that seems to endorse the project, pending the environmental report due

later next month. The current president, Traian Basescu, came out in favor of the project two years ago during elections, and he is paying for it now. His is the face on anti-Gabriel posters, with inscriptions that play on the Romanian terms for gold ingot and kiss-ass. But until the environment report comes out, no public official is allowed to comment publicly, despite numerous efforts by both sides to provoke reaction and gauge interest.

Romanians still have an uneasy relationship with capitalism and the risks that come with doing business, so rumors a few years back that Gabriel was running out of cash rattled their trust in the Canadian company even further. But in December the mining company secured \$30 million from another Canadian investor. Combined with \$20 million in previously available cash, the company says it has more than enough to complete the permits-gathering phase of the project.

Gabriel is anything but stingy with expenses. Its Canadian executives regularly fly between Romania and their home bases. When in Romania, staff members often travel by plane between Bucharest and the city of Cluj, followed by car rides to Rosia Montana. They eat and lodge at fine restaurants. The company's new Bucharest headquarters is in a gorgeous, restored turn-of-the-century mansion in a very posh neighborhood. Gabriel has already spent \$160 million in Romania. In 2004 it was burning through as much as \$3.5 million a month; this year they are forecasting to spend a monthly average of \$2.5 million on the project. It's no wonder that Romanians have grown suspicious, even jealous, of these rich foreigners. Many complain that their own government isn't able to make the most of Romania's riches. Why should foreigners come in and plunder all that gold, just because they have the money?

Golden Promises

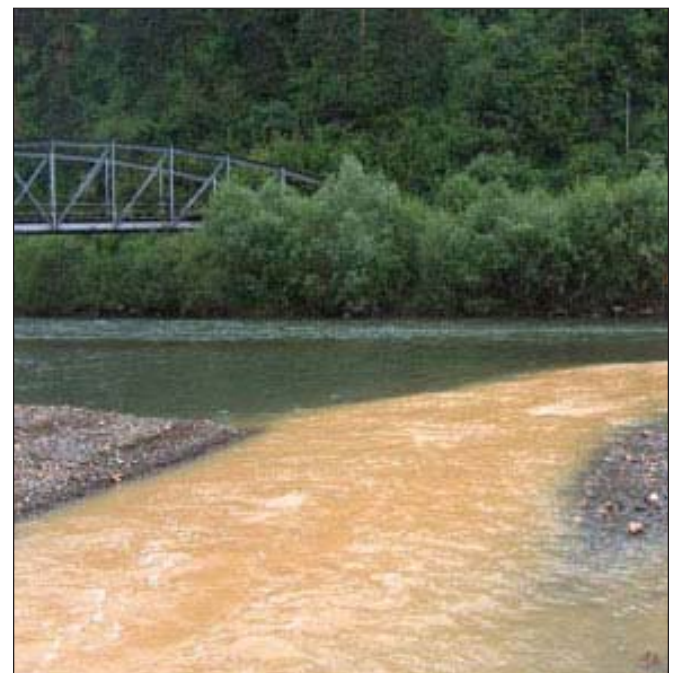
The Canadian company thinks Romania should welcome its big pockets with open arms because theirs would be a large source of foreign investment (at a time when funds from abroad are still trickling in) and because they mean to prove their commitment to "responsible mining and sustainable development." The Canadians propose to infuse \$2 billion over 17 years of its operation into the Romanian economy. The government alone will gain \$500 million, not counting tax receipts. The mine would create 1,200 jobs during the mine-construction phase and more than 600 jobs once operations begin. Long term, the firm envisions, for every new job created at the Rosia Montana mine, another ten jobs will be added in the region and across Romania in industries serving and supplying the new mine.

Their project, Canadians point out, seeks to correct "hundreds of years of short-term thinking on the part of the government." Gabriel's experts have concluded that water in the Rosia Montana area contains more than three times the legal limit of arsenic, and 110 and 64 times le-

gal limits of zinc and iron, respectively. As part of the mining project, they are proposing a complete cleaning and rehabilitation of the zone, including the replanting of trees and vegetation and treatment of run-off water. If the Romanian government were to do it on their own, which it cannot because of lack of funds, it would cost somewhere in the region of 200 million Euros (approximately US\$158.2 million) the Canadian firm says. The "new" Rosia Montana mine will have safer standards than are even those required under the International Cyanide Management Code formulated by the United Nations; in fact, the project "will observe the highest, strictest environmental standards of any gold mining project not only in Romania, but in any European Union nation," they add.

Gabriel has since 2000 funded a \$9-million program of rescue archeology as part of a research program to uncover and restore Roman artifacts in old mining galleries. The amount spent on this alone is almost ten times what the Romanian Ministry of Culture spent on archeology in the last 15 years. The company takes credit for these efforts on its website: "In contrast to the communist-era mining operation, which plowed through an ancient Roman fortress without a second thought, this ongoing restoration program has already saved and housed dozens of relics, only recently salvaging an intact Roman water wheel dating back to the first or second century AD."

While Romanians like to think of Rosia Montana as a bucolic and untainted area, it's in fact a dying mining town. Since 1999 it's been on the Romanian government's list of "disadvantaged" areas. Much of the population is elderly (many poor widows) and unemployed. Young



The Canadian firm that intends to mine in Rosia Montana argues that previous mining, done irresponsibly, has badly polluted area waters and that it will spend money to clean them up.

people keep leaving town in search of work. More than half the workers are unemployed, a number that will rise to 90 percent once the state-owned mine closes in the fall. One in 12 people in the village live on the equivalent of \$2 per day. More than half the homes in the village lack reliable running water and two-thirds of the households must use outdoor latrines. This correspondent visited the village last month and saw not one single restaurant or newspaper stand.

One big issue for critics has been the fact that in order to make the mine functional, the company would displace some 2,000 people, demolish over 900 houses, seven churches, three prayer houses, and nine cemeteries. Gabriel's solution has been two-fold. For one, it has a proposal to build another, "model" village a few kilometers away, complete with a new school, medical clinic, city hall and community center. It also recently installed the first fresh-water pipeline to serve a nearby town. A cultural-heritage plan it has outlined includes a protected zone containing the village's historic structures, plus a future museum to showcase the area's cultural patrimony.

Another feature has been to purchase villagers' homes. This is a rather necessary step for the miners, since Gabriel must secure all property and land rights in order to operate the mine. It has already bought about 42 percent of the homes and it is continuing to do so. Gabriel stopped buying homes outright a couple of years ago, since it ran out of cash and because the firm wanted to wait to secure the government's final approval of the project. Late last year Gabriel began a new program of purchasing, under which owners can make a three-percent cash deposit and enter a pre-sale agreement that becomes binding when the government approves its environmental project.

An Unlikely Mighty Opposition

The biggest problem, however, is a strong community opposition, acting guerilla-style that has succeeded in putting up a number of roadblocks in the way of the mining firm, despite allegedly being mounted on a shoestring. Several nongovernmental organizations are coming together against the project but the strongest voice is that of Alburnus Maior (the Latin name for Rosia Montana), a six-year-old civic association made up of local people. It's debatable whether this organization actually represents most locals, since it seems that many residents can't wait to cash out and leave town. The Rosia Montana mayor, who endorses the mining project, recently won with 90 percent of the vote during elections, while candidates endorsed by Alburnus Maior only secured nine percent.

But Alburnus Maior does speak for a core group of residents who refuse to go away. The president is Eugen David, a 38-year-old farmer who says he will never sell his property to Gabriel and vows to single-handedly revitalize the area by helping make Rosia an ecological tourist area. He has not, how-

ever, advanced any concrete plans to that effect.

The other Alburnus member, and the brains of the operation, is Stephanie Danielle Roth, a Swiss former environmental journalist and French citizen in her mid 30s (she once wrote for the London-based *Ecologist*), who last year won a \$125,000 Goldman Environmental prize for putting up a fight against the Rosia Montana project — money that she then donated to further fund the anti-mining cause. She has been living in Romania since 2002. Her first activity here was fighting the creation of a Dracula theme park in Transylvania — she takes credit for helping defeat that project (though Prince Charles of Wales is likely more responsible for that coup). In the case of Rosia Montana, Ms. Roth claims to have organized the first large-scale protests in Romania since 1989 by mobilizing local residents and forging a coalition of national NGOs, archaeological specialists, academics and clergy to fight the mining proposal.

Alburnus Maior claims that it was in part as a result of her efforts that the World Bank's International Finance Corporation withdrew support for the mining project in October 2002, expressing "social and environmental concerns." Ms Roth has also vowed to prevent Gabriel from obtaining the required archaeological approvals (also known as discharges). Thanks to her efforts, one of those discharges was annulled by one local Court of Appeal last June. Rosia Montana Gold appealed the decision to the Supreme Court in Bucharest. A hearing was scheduled for April, 2006.

Mr. Hill, Gabriel's straight-shooting chief executive, bristles whenever Ms. Roth's name is mentioned. He said in a speech: "We've seen the anti-development groups in action before. We have a word for it in English — we call it carpetbagging: the name for outsiders who come into a community with all their belongings in a single carpetbag. If they manage to stop the mine at Rosia, they'll pack their bags and move on — to the next town in the next country and the next battle in the war against global development." But the company is worried about more than its reputation when it comes to the battle mounted against them. The more the project is delayed, the unhappier the company's shareholders will be. As Gabriel states in its annual report, "Any successful challenges could negatively impact



Alan Hill, the chief executive of Gabriel Resources, has referred to minining critics, some of whom are foreigners, as "carpetbaggers".

the Company's development plans, require additional work and re-application for discharge certificates, or result in additional delays and expenses on our part."

The opposition, to which the Romanian Academy recently voiced its support, argues that the gold mine is not in the public interest and that it stands to destroy Romania's heritage. More, that the risks outweigh any benefits. Main points include arguments to the effect that the mine is not a long-term enterprise and that the number of jobs proposed by Gabriel are not enough to effect a turn-around. Critics, in fact, go as far as likening the resettling the population to "demolishing, reminiscent of a period everybody thinks is over," meaning Communism. The proposed mine, they say, seriously endangers the archaeological area of Alburnus Maior, "which is unique in the world and of great cultural and historical value. The destruction, even partial, of the antique Roman mine galleries is completely unacceptable in a country that honors its roots and past," said a press release issued last month by the Romanian Academy.

The strongest argument the opposition has, in this correspondent's view, is the danger posed by the use of cyanide to extract pure gold. The argument is that the tailings' "toxicity would remain a source of severe risks even if the Canadian firm employs the latest technologies to neutralize the substance cyanide."

One of the reasons cyanide seems threatening to Romanians is an accident that occurred here in Baia Mare in 2000, when a flood cause the primitive tailings reservoir of a mine owned in equal parts by Romanians and an Australian firm to breach its dam and spill into the river Tisza, contaminating waters downstream to Hungary. The Canadians' proposed mine in Rosia Montana would be seven times larger than the Baia Mare mine, so the extent of damage from a cyanide spill would be that much greater. Because of this, Hungarian opposition to the project has been intense, and it promises to get more intense during that country's national election later nest month. In fact, this correspondent's sources say that one reason Canadians are delaying issuing the environmental-impact-assessment report by three weeks is to wait until those elections are over and not get caught up in the campaigning of nationalist Hungarians.

A Hungarian independent moviemaker has produced a film — "The New Eldorado" — which is critical of the Rosia Montana project and is being shown with great success throughout Hungary (where it's available on DVDs), Europe (Brussels) and now Romania. It was shown in a Bucharest theater for two weeks in March, 2006. Romanian NGOs have promoted the movie in places distant from the mine site, such as the Black Sea port of Constanta. "When Romanian NGOs get bored, they band together in the cause *du jour*," one source told this correspondent.

The Canadian company's answer to the whole cyanide

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Opponents of the mining project have staged loud protests in which they denounce the planned use of cyanide, saying "Cyanide Kills"

nide question is that the toxic substance will be carried away from the mine "responsibly" and that it has a plan for efficient and safe transport and destruction of cyanide; they told me privately that because of new technologies used to reduce concentration of cyanide, those levels will be 15 times below EU standards.

Ms. Roth has definitely brought an international flavor to the anti-mining battle here — besides introducing new terms such as "carpet-bagging" and "crunchy granola," Romania is finally experiencing the anti-globalization movement, which is the reason the cause now appeals to many young Romanians and university students who are just learning about civic duty and environmental protection and are proudly carrying "Save Rosia Montana" banners. If Ms. Roth and Alburnus Maior bring some substance to the campaign, it's young Romanians who are helping publicize it, guerilla style. This is especially true with students from the university town of Cluj, who recently mobilized several leading groups of artists and designers and earlier this week launched a powerful street campaign of anti-mining posters and stenciled graffiti in 18 cities around the country. The graffiti designs appear either as a bones-and-skull stencil with the message "Cyanide kills," or a bust of President Traian Basescu with word-play about "gold ingot" and "kiss-ass." Two years ago, Mr. Basescu, who was running for president, made

a speech in which he declared himself in support of the mining project.

The stencil art supposedly is the product of a Cluj-based group of 20-somethings called “The Playground” who would like to remain anonymous and thus escape the wrath of public officials angry with the mess they have caused on public and private property. Another group, “MindBomb,” takes credit for the national poster-ad campaign. This group of self-described intellectuals formed in 2002, also in Cluj, as a movement protesting press censorship and infringement of freedom of expression. Over the past few years it has staged a number of visual protests against what it considers infringement on citizens’ rights. In the anti-mining campaign, posters carry such slogans as “Silence is Golden,” or “The Golden Wedding,” with subtitles such as “Don’t Allow Rosia Montana to Die” and “People are more Important than Gold.”

Young people are leery of mainstream media, which still tend to be propagandistic and opinion-ridden rather than objective. Instead, they have been drawn to anti-mining articles appearing in popular satire weekly “*Academia Catavencu*.” Trouble is, many young people are embracing the anti-mining cause without knowing all the facts — cyanide is indeed a threat, but the claim that Rosia Montana is a potential tourist destination that needs protecting is a myth; many have never been there, and have not had a chance to see the orange color of the acid-rain-polluted river flowing nearby, and the damage that is a result of centuries of poor management. During the two world wars, for example, the area’s streams were so polluted and ran so red from the mining and acid mine drainage that the town was known as “*Verespatak*” in Hungarian, or “Red River.” As it happened during Communism, ignorance can be used to manipulate nationalism built on false assumptions.

“*Academia*” has had wild success over the last decade with readers mostly under 40, and as a result has developed into something approaching a media empire, which also includes a couple of NGOs, a media-monitoring agency and an environmentalist outfit that seeks to protect the Danube; it’s become Gabriel’s worst nightmare as well. It’s a sign of these awkward transition times that this publishing organization has on the one hand made a name for itself as a purveyor of justice and investigative journalism, but meanwhile has selectively respected freedom of expression. The fact that “*Academia*” has declared an all-out war on Canadians seems to have affected its editorial content. Rumor has it that reporters working for a respectable daily owned by “*Academia*,” namely, “*Cotidianul*,” are under strict orders not to cover the Rosia Montana story. Rumor also has it that “*Academia*” is funding anti-mining efforts. Regardless, the biggest problem this correspondent sees is the lack of transparency among anti-mining campaigners. If nothing else, they would do well to take some cues from capitalist “devils” and reveal to the public their funding sources — or else lose themselves over time in petty Balkan in-



Critics of the mining project recently posted fliers denouncing what they call government complicity — the clever headline here is “Silence is Golden”.

trigues and old-fashioned Communist protectionist tactics — exactly what they are trying to avoid.

Times promise to get even headier once the environmental impact-assessment report is issued later next month. If the last few years of scandals, accusations and campaigning on both sides are any indication, this will be a very hot summer for both Canadians and their opponents. Following that, the Romanian government will issue a final verdict on whether Rosia Montana will be turned into the largest gold mine area in Europe or whether it will be the short goodbye to a lengthy ordeal. This process will also be a good test of how Romanians are learning to deal with their transition to the market economy and foreign investment at a time when this country’s own long transition promises to end around her entry into the European Union.

The Meeting

I got so carried away describing events and facts relating to the mining story that I delayed describing the meeting I mentioned at the beginning of the piece. Critics of the Rosia Montana mining projects had complained to officials in charge of overseeing television programming at National Audio-Visual Council, or CNA, about a series of TV ads the Canadian firm had been running.

CNA had to vote on whether the campaign had falsified the truth and violated people's dignity.

According to the mining company, this awareness campaign, on which the Canadians have spent about \$650,000, was meant to balance the negative publicity created over many years by the opposition. But the ads have had the opposite effect, especially a "Gabriel has the solution" promise made in these ads. Some of the material shows a pretty depressed town and presents testimonials from poor people who say that they want out of there and are in favor of the mining project. The mining firm argues that none of the locals interviewed in the ads were paid to say these things; also, by the time a public meeting occurred, the company had smartly pulled them off the air, saying that the contracts with the respective outlets had expired.

It was interesting at last to see both sides gathered in one place. The contrast in appearance was striking. The mining company came with an army of elegantly suited executives, lawyers and English-speaking staff, all generally beautiful people. The opposition — five people, including Ms. Roth and Mr. David, representing Alburnus Maior, as well as a public advocate — looked the part of the gritty community advocates. They had traveled that morning by train from the city of Cluj (five hours on the train; the meeting began at ten). The opposition came with hiking boots, mountain clothes and rucksacks. They often acted jittery, interrupting CNA members and insulting mining representatives. A representative of *Academia Catavencu's* media-monitoring agency, also present at the meeting in support of her NGO "brothers," agreed that their appearance wasn't very impressive. "The way they look doesn't make them believable," she said. Even so, she went afterward to speak with and advise them. I am wondering if the Romanian NGO community is rallying together just for the sake of appearing united.

Mr. Eugen David, president of Alburnus Maior, spoke first, saying that Gabriel's ads made him and the community seem to be inferior and "handicapped," whereas he doesn't see himself as a handicapped person. "Not all of us there are poor," he said. "They make everything look like a disaster," he said, adding that the spot ads created "extraordinary stress" for the villagers. One adviser said it "was immoral" for the mining company to film a disaster they had helped create by starting exploration work a few years ago. This, I thought, was an unfair statement, given that the area has been polluted for centuries.

The president of CNA, Ralu Filip, interjected, saying that Rosia Montana had been mined long before the Canadians came, and that the damage couldn't be there because of them; also, that it wasn't in his jurisdiction to assess the environmental harm. He indicated that the environmental report would help clear up doubts. Mr. Filip is a rare Romanian who actually endorses the mining

project, but I have my doubts about his genuine allegiance. Someone close to the company told me that he "has been lobbied for," whatever that means.

Mr. David also mentioned that he is seeking to open an ecotourism business and that the ads are causing damage to the image of the area. Ms. Roth, speaking in broken but grammatically proper Romanian, called the mining company executives "liars" and urged the commission to investigate their untruthful allegations. She talked about the fact that in the Czech Republic the use of cyanide in mining is forbidden, which seemed to impress some of the CNA members. Insecure Romanians are often swayed by what other nations think and do.

John Aston, vice president of development for the Romanian subsidiary established here by Canadians, spoke in English and said that there has been a lot of misunderstanding about his company's mission in Romania and that he appreciated the fact that this was the first time both sides found themselves in public. A soft-spoken Englishman with a South African accent, Mr. Aston is the charming and diplomatic public face of the Canadian company. He came to Romania as part of the first Canadian contingent years ago, and despite trials and tribulations has remained their voice of reason. He argued that despite attempts made by the opposition to create an image of Gabriel as an evil company hiding behind secrets, his company has held over 200 public meetings throughout the country in an attempt to reach out to Romanians and address their concerns. The opposition, he said, refused to engage in an open dialogue and never made it to any of those meetings. "We find it ironic that we, as a company, are willing to discuss the environmental problems [in Rosia Montana] but not the civil-society opposition. We hope that it's all due to a misunderstanding." As for the commercials, he said, "We stand behind the ads. They are half of the truth that's happening in Rosia Montana. These guys [in the opposition] tell the other half."

At meeting's end, the nine members of the CNA voted against the Alburnus Maior complaints, but the vote was close (5 to 4 in one instance and 5 to 3, with one abstaining in another). They also decided to closely monitor the mining company's ads in the future. Many members seemed critical of the fact that the mining company is spending money to promote a project that still hasn't happened and that the spots showed the misery in Rosia Montana. Some were even interested in the fact that other countries had forbidden the use of cyanide in mining.

To the end, Mr. Filip proved to be a strong supporter of the mining company: "We aren't here to judge how spots are made. But I see that the way we talk here is the way of life in Romania. One point of view must prevail instead of coexisting. We're a nation that denigrates capitalism — it was yucky before, and it's yucky now as well. Here you need to see what's good for the community." □

Current Fellows and their Activities

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Richard D. Connerney (January 2005 - 2007) • **INDIA**

A lecturer in Philosophy, Asian Religions and Logic at Rutgers University, Rick Connerney is spending two years as a Phillips Talbot Fellow studying and writing about the intertwining of religion, culture and politics in India, once described by former U.S. Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith as "a functioning anarchy." Rick has a B.A. and an M.A. in religion from Wheaton College and the University of Hawaii, respectively.

Kay Dilday (October 2005-2007) • **FRANCE/MOROCCO**

An editor for the *New York Times* Op-Ed page for the past five years, Kay holds an M.A. in Comparative International Politics and Theory from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Tufts University, and has done graduate work at the *Universiteit van Amsterdam* in the Netherlands and the *Cours de Civilisation de la Sorbonne*. She has traveled in and written from Haiti and began her journalistic life as city-council reporter for *Somerville This Week*, in Somerville, MA.

Cristina Merrill (June 2004-2006) • **ROMANIA**

Born in Bucharest, Cristina moved from Romania to the United States with her mother and father when she was 14. Learning English (but retaining her Romanian), she majored in American History at Harvard College and there became captain of the women's tennis team. She received a Master's degree in Journalism from New York University in 1994, worked for several U.S. publications from *Adweek* to the *New York Times*, and is spending two years in Romania watching it emerge from the darkness of the Ceauscescu regime into the presumed light of membership in the European Union and NATO.

Nicholas Schmidle (October 2005-2007) • **IRAN**

Nicholas is a freelance writer interested in the intersection of culture, religion and politics in Asia. He is spending two years in Pakistan writing on issues of ethnic, sectarian, and national identity. Previously, he has reported from Central Asia and Iran, and his work has been published in the *Washington Post*, the *Weekly Standard*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and others. Nick received an M.A. in International Affairs - Regional Studies from American University in December 2005. He lives with his wife, Rikki.

Andrew J. Tabler (February 2005 - 2007) • **SYRIA/LEBANON**

Andrew has lived, studied and worked in the Middle East since a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Fellowship enabled him to begin Arabic-language studies and work toward a Master's degree at the American University in Cairo in 1994. Following the Master's, he held editorships with the *Middle East Times* and *Cairo Times* before moving to Turkey, Lebanon and Syria and working as a Senior Editor with the Oxford Business Group and a correspondent for the *Economist* Intelligence Unit. His two-year ICWA fellowship bases him in Beirut and Damascus, where he will report on Lebanese affairs and Syrian reform.

Jill Winder (July 2004 - 2006) • **GERMANY**

With a B.A. in politics from Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA and a Master's degree in Art Curating from Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Jill is an ICWA Donors' Fellow looking at Germany through the work, ideas and viewpoints of its contemporary artists. Before six months of intensive study of the German language in Berlin, she was a Thomas J. Watson Fellow looking at post-communist art practice and the cultural politics of transition in the former Soviet bloc (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine).

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