

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

By Cathy Von Kintzel

Sande Ewart is never quite sure when he'll get the call, the call that leads to 10-hour days of monitoring unrest or upheaval in a Central American country.

Like the one in June 2009, when his boss called him at home with news of a coup in Honduras.

"Canada was quite involved in trying to work out a solution," says Ewart, a policy analyst with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

"That was an extremely busy time, and it got a lot of focus."

It can be hard to predict what the next international crisis will be and whether it will be in Ewart's neck of the woods. His focus is bilateral relations between Canada and a number of Central American countries. In part, his job involves compiling background research, monitoring new developments and preparing briefing information for ministers and others who may be involved in bilateral discussions and meetings.

*Sande
Ewart*

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It's particularly important work when things heat up politically. The coup in Honduras was one of his higher-profile projects.

But, after 2½ years, Ewart still considers himself to be fairly low level in the department. It is, nevertheless, an interesting place to be. He could easily spend a day corresponding with Canadian diplomatic missions in Central America and with colleagues at the Organization of American States in Washington.

The 32-year-old Ottawa resident enjoys the work, thriving in the busy times and delving into fascinating issues. The work also involves occasional travel, often to work with Canadian embassies abroad.

“Sometimes, it's hard work, but it's rewarding at the end of the day,” he says. “I think the most rewarding part of my work is knowing that I'm working on something that matters. Even when the work gets a bit dry, I have the feeling that if I had called in sick that day, something important wouldn't have gotten done.”

Originally from Saint John, N.B., Ewart holds a Master's Degree in International Development Studies from Saint Mary's (2008).

“My studies at (Saint Mary's) certainly gave me a head start in getting where I am today and in creating a career path focused on international issues.”

Ewart travelled to El Salvador to research his thesis on access to clean drinking water in rural communities.

“There are many good experiences in seeing other parts of the world that are completely different from our own reality,” he says. “Coming from Canada and thinking about the abundance of water and plenty of access . . . we have no understanding of the challenges people face in other countries.”

Back home in Ottawa, Ewart is looking forward to a new chapter in his life. He's getting married this summer to fiancée Myha. □