

Rotary Club of Calgary West  
(A Year of Rotary Fun and Fellowship)

# The Weekly WESTERNER

Box 4572, Station C, Calgary, Alberta T2T 5N3, La Joie de Vivre, Fridays 12:15 pm

**President:** Lynne Thornton **President-Elect:** Karl Herzog

**Past President:** Garfield Ganong **Secretary:** Ron Morrison

**Treasurer:** Mike French

**Directors:** Stan Beveridge, Garth Evans, Mark Ferguson, Margot McDermott,  
Marie Rickard, Jim Walker

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## Setting the Scene

This was our last formal meeting of the calendar year 2008 since our December 26 (Boxing Day) and January 2, 2009, meetings have been cancelled. It was truly a festive event. It was held at the Holiday Inn on Macleod Trail at 42<sup>nd</sup> street. It was a chance for us to test out one of the short-listed new permanent venue locations for our lunches. The room was festively decorated, the spirit was high, the service was awesome, as was the food. This scribe had a member of the venue selection committee (**Bryden Horwood**) at his table and Bryden assured us that the venue was told to present a meal that would be typical of what we would receive in the future. Boy, it was also like being back at **Sam Switzer's** Elbow River Casino (but not quite). There were salads, roast beef, vegetables, oven roasted potatoes and Yorkshire pudding. The dessert, though this scribe would not typically notice such things, was scrumptious. The cost was \$25, slightly more than we are used to, but well worth the price with the free parking (and lots of it).

**President Lynne** assured us that this was a venue that was presently going to also undergo some upgrades and renovations, including paint, new carpet and such. This would be an ideal location from this member's perspective.

Our own **Stan Cichon** greeted everyone at the door and handed out name tags. The old grumpy curmudgeon was quite festive...it was great to see. The festive season must have hit a soft spot in the old fellow!! Newly elected President-elect **Sa'adat Keshavjee** was on the desk taking in the cash...and smiling as he did it. Good to see **Sa'adat** there...and so early!

The room was spacious as club members socialized and made jolly prior to President Lynne's calling the meeting to order at 12:15 sharp. She had on a beautiful and appropriate furry winter hat that looked like a costume piece from the Dr Zhivago movie. At 40 below zero outside with wind chill, it was very appropriate!

Unfortunately we had no piano this week, but **Ron Jones** led us in a fairly good rendition of *O Canada*. **Don Axford** then did a beautiful, timely and appropriate invocation before we were able to line up with our feedbags at the buffet for our scrumptious Christmas lunch. **Larry Doyle** was supposed to be at the head table, but was noticeably absent as he searched for his lost wallet at home! President Lynne was joined by our resident historian and best Club Paddle Ball player **Ron Staughton**, Past President and Past District Governor **Steve "Stretch" Rickard** along with Rotary Club of Calgary Chinook's Past President (the same year as our own **Bob Hamshaw**) **Bart Dailley** who was also our guest speaker for the day.

### **Noteworthy Notes and Announcements:**

There were a few announcements, including **Mike French** promoting a casino for our partner organization whom we promised to raise money for through casinos, for **Habitat for Humanity**. **Mike** noted there are a few shifts still to be filled so please contact him or **Karl Herzog** to sign up. Also **Karl's Motive-Action Casino** is January 11/12 if you can help out there. Lynne also promoted that on January 17/18 there would be another casino if you are available to help, this one for Further Education Society of Alberta. And remember, our own casino is in March.

Stan Cichon introduced our guests and visitors including **Pauline Evans' Aunt Betty**, **Chris Davis's** guests, two members from Calgary South (sure is good to see those Calgary South boys find us wherever we gypsy too!!). There were a few other guests as well to mark the festive lunch we undertook.

**Bill Tapuska** announced that the **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Rotary Club of Calgary Family Christmas Brunch** being held at Pinebrook Golf and Country Club on Sunday, December 21 at 11 am was sold out with 185 tickets sold. (See below for an update on this wonderful event. Though this scribe could not attend due to a family member with an awful cold/flu, the feedback on the brunch is recorded below.)

President Lynne also announced that we had made a donation of \$200 to SAS (Servant's Anonymous Society) for Christmas. This is the backbone of our present venue location La Joie de Vivre. President Lynne also noted the board had approved a \$1500 check would be issued to the Lacombe Rotary Club to assist them to defray costs incurred by the failed Anna Marie Kaufman concert tour. Several other clubs from the district have also contributed to assist in the debt of \$22,000!

Our inbound exchange student, **Valerie**, spoke of her adventures the past week including the Rotary Club of Chinook's Christmas Party (of which she said ours was better...smart girl, she knows where her bread is buttered). She also attended, with **Margot McDermott**, Theatre Calgary's annual production of A Christmas Carol (are there no prisons...are there no workhouses?). She thoroughly enjoyed both events she said. Then our own Pauline Evans presented Valerie with a festively wrapped Christmas gift. (The scribe never got to see what it was, but the smile and look of surprise and excitement on Valerie's face when she received the gift was like that of a child on Christmas morning. What a great feeling for all.)

Bryden Horwood, our resident Community World Service guru, updated us on our Tonga project. Though our commitment and work is long completed, the accolades continue for this project and our support of it. Bryden read an excerpt from an Australian Government publication that noted how our club (in Canada you know) championed this hospital lab project and made it a reality and how it has been so important to the Tonga people. The government of Australia has since taken this project over and is operating and funding it. What a great story of how we made such a difference in the lives of others and how well recognized we are for it. So next time you or someone asks "What do we support and do internationally?" remember this story. The one about a little Rotary club in Calgary, Alberta, Canada that searched out, researched and supported the building of a medical laboratory in the small 3<sup>rd</sup> world country of Tonga and had such an impact on the lives of the locals that the Australian government stepped in to ensure its long term success from our meagre and initial beginnings.

President Lynne, on behalf of **Bernie Ward** reminded members that we still need drivers to sign up for Strawberry Shortcake deliveries. If you are available to be a driver or a navigator (it is supposed to be a balmy 18 degrees above zero that day, clear sunny skies and clear roads...or so I was told) that day please contact Bernie Ward at [wardjb@shaw.ca](mailto:wardjb@shaw.ca) as soon as possible. We need drivers please!!

**Des DeFreitas** brought us greetings from the Orangeville Rotary Group Friendship Exchange. Just that morning, Des heard from the leader of the exchange to say all their folks who came here last summer to

Calgary to visit us through a Friendship Exchange wished all our club members the best over the holiday season. Des aptly told them we send out KPRs (kindest personal regards) in return.

The **House Committee** was thanked by President Lynne for making sure everything was at the Holiday Inn on MacLeod for the meeting. They really do such a super job! Well done team. (The Grinch of a sergeant-at-arms though duly noted they did forget to bring along one VERY important item...the sergeant's badge and rope. Rightfully so, **Don Alexander and Bill Lawless** paid the fine!)

And finally, last but not least, **Mike Carlin** of the Membership Committee brought notice to the club of a planned membership drive event in the new year. Stay tuned for details.

### **Other Happenings**

Due to the fact that the sergeant-at-arms, bless his soul, took so long handing out fines, Ron Jones was only able to lead us in a single Christmas carol sing song. So was that so bad? A wonderful rendition by our tone-deaf group of a traditional Christmas carol brought tears of joy/sorrow to all. **Thanks Ron for your leadership on this front.**

Due to the fact of a nature call, the scribe was unable to learn who won the 50/50 draw or how much it was for. So congratulations to the winner, be sure to donate the "take" to a worthy cause. And for those not so fortunate to win, double up at our next meeting on January 9 and perhaps your time will come again...or for **Don Bateman**, come again, and again and again!

The sergeant-at-arms was once again tremendous. He ensured that anyone who came with cash in their pockets, left with little to none. Fines went to many and ultimately all. But wait...that was not a sad sound that came from the Who's in Whoville Rotary Club, it was a glad sound. When the SAA opened the floor to "Happy Bucks" the sound of joy emitted from many as loonies and toonies we tossed into the collection hat to regale the other members of family coming home (especially Chris Lee who welcomed Connie home from eight weeks in Asia - he no longer has to eat TV dinners!), thankfulness of a great year and other stories so apropos to this time of giving. It is said that the Grinch/sergeant-at-arms hear grew two times that day! Merry Christmas to All!

### **Bart Dailey – The Story of Christmas**

What a wonderful presentation. Bart regaled us with the history of Christmas. To this reporter, and I am sure many others, this was a fun and informative look at Christmas and how it came to be as we know it today. Bart took us from the time of Christ (or shortly thereafter, say 45AD) to modern day Santa. Great tidbits of information and little known knowledge. Extremely entertaining and fun. But, as always with Bart and anyone related to the holiday season, his message was clear, this is a time of giving!

In delivering this message we learned that the Christians first began to celebrate Christmas in "the closet" as it was forbidden to be a Christian during the Roman times. Being a bright group, the Christians chose December 25th to be the day of celebration due to the fact the Romans had a major festival themselves from the 17-26 of December and knowing they would all be hung over from festivities on the 25<sup>th</sup> and not notice the Christians celebrating on this day!

We learned how in 529 AD, Christmas was made an official holiday. The Germans began decorating trees in honour of the event. The ideas of candles came from the Romans. By 800, Christmas had become a 12-day holiday! Then that curmudgeon, Oliver Cromwell, put a damper on everything around 1640 or so and Christmas was banned again because people were having too much fun! Queen Victoria brought it all back in her reign and her Consort Albert from across the Channel together brought us such traditions as turkey and family fun.

In other parts of the world, Christmas evolved as well. In Turkey, Bishop Nicholas helped two young girls who had no dowry to get married. He tossed gold coins down their chimney and alas they ended up in their stockings that were hanging on the fireplace mantle. This is our chimney and stockings scenario. In Holland, Sinter Claus was the man! When Clement Moore heard from a Dutch friend about Sinter Claus he immortalized him with a story about him and hence “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” came to be.

There also was the creation of Saint Claus which morphed into Santa Claus. (This is all true Bart told us!) Then in 1931 Coca Cola produced a picture of this Santa Claus resting back with a Coke in hand after delivering his presents. Up to that day, green was the color of Santa’s suit. Coke changed it to match their red and since then, here in North America, Santa wears red!. And finally, in 1949, Gene Autry immortalized the idea of reindeer and sleigh being all part of Santa’s ensemble with his rendition of the poem brought to music, of “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer”.

Thanks Bart for this fun and informative presentation and for driving home the remainder of this is a time of giving.

### **The Family Christmas Brunch at Pinebrook**

The feedback from the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Rotary Club of Calgary West Christmas Brunch at Pinebrook Golf and Country Club was fantastic. As always the food was amazing. A cornucopia of culinary delight was had by all. The event was sold out as usual, presentations and fellowship had by members, families and guests. The day was capped off with an amazing choral display by the 35 members of **Rhythm of the Rockies**. What a great show. To **Bill Tapuska and his team**, once again congratulations on a fantastic event!

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

December 26: No meeting  
January 2: No Meeting

### **At La Joie de Vivre – 1008 14<sup>th</sup> Street SE**

January 9: The Lost Boys of Sudan  
January 16: Dr Leonard Waverman – Dean of the Haskayne School of Business at U of C  
January 23: Our own Bob Kerr and his Annual Robbie Burns Tribute