

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

The Weekly WESTERNER

Box 4572, Station C, Calgary, Alberta T2T 5N3
Holiday Inn, McLeod Trail, Fridays 12:15 pm

President: Karl Herzog **President-Elect:** Sa'adat Keshavjee

Past President: Lynne Thornton **Secretary:** Ron Morrison

Treasurer: Des DeFreitas

Directors: Stan Beveridge, Ron Brookes, Bryden Horwood, Bruce Taylor,
Bernie Ward, David Williams

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The Chinook winds were in full force, the sun shining and the snow was melting at a ferocious pace. After several weeks of frigid temperatures, everyone was in high spirits after the Christmas break.

President Karl had trouble on his hands trying to capture our attention and get the meeting underway on time. The bell got a workout! We joined **Des DeFreitas** in our national anthem and **Marie Rickard** in a very thoughtful grace. And we were off for roast beef and mashed potatoes.

Kurt Schurer and **Roy Thurm** held down the front desk, while we were greeted enthusiastically by **Brent Barootes** who also turned up later as the sergeant-at-arms.

President Karl's head table hosted **Robyn Braley**, PR guy extraordinaire, who would thank our speaker, **Marnie Cardell**, our speaker, **Mike Carlin** who would introduce her, **Murray Hunter** and **Tim Anderson**.

Our visitors and guests were introduced by none other than Brent Barootes (does anyone else do anything around here?). I had the pleasure of sitting with **John Rymes** and his guest, **Carol Simpson** from Mount Royal University's Foundation. Our other guests included three exchange students with us – our own **Marco**, **Ann** from Lethbridge Sunrise, and **Andrea** our outbound, leaving sometime this coming August.

The enthusiastic and ever smiling Marco reported that his new host mum, **Amy Schalin**, and her husband, **Rob Weatherall**, had taken Marco and his new snowboard to Sunshine, Fernie, Panorama, and Nakiska to test the slopes. Marco gleefully informed us he had mastered the snowboarding techniques and was having a blast in the snow. I wonder if he knows how spoiled he is!

Bryden Horwood spoke to us about Alpha House, refreshing our memories on the project the late **Jo Johanson** started many years ago. Alpha House serves people addicted to drugs in their many forms, including alcohol. They are always in need of clothing that is new, or clean and used, new underwear and socks. Bryden declared next Friday to be Alpha House Day and requested we bring appropriate clothing and underwear items for delivery. Items for both males and females are welcomed.

As President Karl mentioned **Strawberry Shortcake**, two Rotarians stood up and made their way to the mike, **Bernie Ward** and **Ron Brookes**. Bernie said we got "two short guys for the price of one" and John

Rymes observed it was “fitting for the shortcake” announcement. Groan!!! So the guys want us to sign up to volunteer for at least one of the many jobs available. Ron has also emailed us all a promo flyer and order forms to use. We’re urged to canvas family and friends and business contacts. Doctors and lawyers, dentists and all those professional types in the “service” industry with lots of clients to recognize would be good customers too. All orders must be in by Sunday, February 7.

Bernie Ward gave us what is planned to be a regular feature: A Rotary Moment. It seems like a great idea to give us all bits of Rotary information, especially if we don’t read our Rotarian magazine right away.

“Thirty years ago this year, The Rotary Foundation funded the first Health, Hunger and Humanity Grant project: to immunize six million children in the Philippines against polio. **James T. Bomar Jr.**, then the RI president, signed an agreement with the country’s government to begin the immunizations, and on 29 September, 1979, he administered the first drops of vaccine to a Philippine child. The US\$760,000 effort set the stage for Rotary’s decades-long commitment to the eradication of polio.”

Ron Jones is off to a flying start in 2010 with his pet project: Rotary Challenger Park. He’s looking for volunteers for the park’s casino February 26 and 27 at the Cash Casino on Blackfoot. Oh and by-the-way mark your calendars for September 1 for the park’s annual golf tournament. Good advance planning with all this snow around!

Duncan Stanners posted a survey on your email and asks that you take just one minute to answer a couple of questions regarding the idea of hands-on projects for the future. We’ve had great success with these types of projects in the past and they’ve given us an opportunity to do something worthwhile, have fun and get to know each other a bit in the process. So have your say and fill in the survey.

A delighted **Gordon Rodrigues** walked away with the 50/50 and \$27 to help defray Christmas expenses for all those presents for his grandkids.

Brent Barootes turned up as the dreaded sergeant-at-arms and really got after it. He launched into a lecture on the importance of money, and promptly fined all the exchange students in attendance – Marco, Andrea, and Ann. Then he went on to say that he wasn’t slated to be sergeant today, but the other person hadn’t shown up. Kurt Schurer, in the spirit of the 4 Way Test, admitted he was on for sergeant duties, was in attendance, but since Brent had an obviously long list of supposed sins, he should go ahead. Loud chants of “Kurt, Kurt, Kurt” ensued and an emboldened Brent proceeded to somehow fine everyone in the room, including guests.

There were some “happy bucks” even after all that. Ron Jones, the man that he is, took the fall for the sergeant mix up (he’s chairman of the committee this year) and paid \$2.00.

Robyn Braley was delighted to announce he’d been booted out of the Heart Clinic due to a clean bill of health. Terrific news!!

GUEST SPEAKER

Mike Carlin was pleased to introduce Marnie Cardell as our guest speaker. Mike had first met Marnie on a home build in Ensenada, Mexico, in 2008 – so they were old buds from working so closely in that time. Marnie just joined Calgary West in /December of ’09. Dan Doherty sponsored her.

Marnie began by filling us in with an explanation of what happened to the scheduled speaker. Tim Morgan, a co-founder of WestJet, was flying to Libya and thus unavailable. Marnie quickly volunteered to do her “classification talk” on virtually no notice. Thanks Marnie for filling in so well!

Starting off asking a couple of questions: Do you take vacations? And do you own a vacation home? Marnie got the feel of the audience because she was talking to us on her vocation of resort properties and real estate tourism. She has worked on resort projects in the US, Central America, Mexico and Canada. However, the recession that started in the US turned the tap off. People rethought ownership in a luxury timeshare, hotel or fractional ownership in upscale properties.

The times brought risk versus uncertainty to the surface, meaning potential buyers are not sure of the length of the downturn or they see permanent changes on the horizon. Behavior can change by living with uncertainty, people get more accustomed and more accepting of it.

The crash of Merrill Lynch affected the building and development industry by about \$63 billion with major resort names being heavily affected. We've had recessions before in Canada, but this one seemed deeper. We have learned to live with unrest, perhaps because we are cautious, as seen in how much money is in Canadian bank accounts, and our seemingly faster rebound this time around.

It's a buyer's market if you are interested in properties in Canada, the US, Mexico or points even farther south. Marnie's advice in this market is take plenty of time to do your due diligence, go see, do your homework, talk to the locals, talk to lots of people. There is some new development which has been re-evaluated, perhaps into smaller unit sizing and luxury extras dropped. Financing is slowly coming from large financial institutions. Potential buyers are tending to want to be closer to home, and wanting to possibly be more involved in a community.

An interesting side bar to the recession is in Mexico. The country got really hit because of the H1N1 flu, travelers worried about catching the bug, and so cancelled travel plans. The hospitality industry, ie. the restaurant servers who are traditionally very low paid, are really suffering because they heavily depend on tips. So if you're traveling please remember to give a good tip for good service. There seems to be an emerging middle class in Mexico due largely to the fact that mortgages are now available, where they weren't before, apparently.

Because of the downturn, Marnie said she's more involved than ever in the community, politics, kids' sports, the marketing board at Heritage Park, recycling (she helped her community dry run the green box concept), her church, her husband, and service groups, namely Calgary West. She's working on Strawberry Shortcake and will head out to Ensenada in February for another build. Turns out her personal motto is very fitting "Can do"!

Robyn thanked Marnie on behalf of the club for an excellent talk, and for stepping in at the very last minute! She was awarded a treasured Boltman as a thank-you!

NEXT

January 15	Ken Read – A Crazy Canuck – Canada's 2010 Olympics
January 22	Dr Bob Schultz – Business in the Year and Decade Ahead
January 29	Catholic Bishop Fred Henry – Homeless in Calgary
FEBRUARY	WORLD UNDERSTANDING MONTH
February 5	(Tentative) Bruce Dowbiggen: Calgary Herald
February 12	No meeting at Holiday Inn – All available club members delivering Strawberry Shortcakes – Regular Meeting cancelled
February 19	Stay tuned and amazing program to be announced soon!
Tuesday February 23	An All Club's Calgary Dinner – The Rotary International Foundation and Integrity Awards with Guest Speaker Past RI Chair Bob Scott – Location and details to follow
February 26	No Club Meeting due to all Club's meeting earlier in the week

MARCH	LITERACY MONTH
March 5	Roland George – National Energy Board Member
March 12	Calgary Police Chief, Rick Hanson
March 19	Calgary Alderman Jim Stevenson: The Airport Tunnel