

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

It has been three weeks since we last had a meeting and boy people must have missed the fellowship! We had what looked like a very full house for the **first meeting of 2009** and the first meeting of the last half of the Rotary year. There were several guests along with many members of our club in attendance. With all the commotion and camaraderie telling each other of our holidays, new year's resolutions and the discussion of **Mike French's** fantastic New Year party at his house on January 3, the meeting was called to order two minutes late.

Prior though, **Kurt Schurer** was on the front desk collecting our lunch payments. Next to him was **Don Alexander** collecting for the 50/50 draw! (By the way, the **50/50** was won by **Bill Quinney** - \$32! It should be noted that the sergeant at arms, **Garfield Ganong**, missed the fact that **Bill Quinney and Chris Lee** somehow got in front of the scribe's table for the lunch line. They both got off scott free!)

Our own **Don Axford** lead us in *O Canada*, and then went onto double duty delivering the invocation. It was announced at this time, and, as this investigative reporter was able to determine, was also announced at the **Christmas Brunch at Pinebrook** in December, that our own **Mike French has been elected as the District Governor nominee for 2010-2011**. Yes, our club will be host to another District Governor. Congratulations Mike on this honour, it is very well deserved and we are excited about the "change" you will bring to the District in your year as DG., if it will be anything like your year as president of our club. The District membership should be excited to have such a dedicated and committed Rotarian to lead us in the 2010-2011 year. As was noted above, this announcement was also made at the **Rotary Club of Calgary West Annual Christmas Brunch at Pinebrook**. Due to colds, sneezing and so forth, this scribe and his family were unable to attend, but all reports were that it was a very amazing event. (As usual!) Congratulations to **Bill Tapuska and all his team** on another wonderful, family oriented and fellowship driven event. **Thank you for all your work each year and that of your committee.**

At the head table this past week was what we called "The Year of 2001"! Joining **President Lynne** and our guest speaker, **Thomas Jieldit**, were Mike French and the following illustrious members, all of whom were inducted into our club in 2001- **Marg Henschel, Garfield Ganong and Bryden Horwood.**

Our guests were introduced by our ever present and dedicated greeter (who again this week welcomed all and handed out name tags) and publisher of this fine rag, **David Williams**. After introductions, we regaled our guests with our welcome song. However, it seemed we must have forgotten the words and sequence for this great welcome! The singing (to put in blunt terms) "sucked"! Furthermore, our "rat a tat

tat" format was also off sequence: noting **Larry Doyle** led this miscued banging. Perhaps by next week we will all be back in order!

Our experienced and well acquainted sergeant at arms this past week was none other than Past President Garfield Ganong. Garfield stepped from the ivory tower of the head table to lower himself to the level of the plebeians in the audience long enough to **extract the loose change and bills from most club members**. (He looked like the king or tax collector from the Wizard of Id comic strip!) He seemed to be making up for two missed meetings and also must have felt the **"time was right for the picking"** before the credit card bills from the holidays came in later this month. Garfield covered the gambit. Anyone without a pin, if they were early or late, anyone not at Mike French's New Year's party, all got fined. Furthermore, to make sure he hit EVERYONE, Garfield fined anyone who felt they were not treated fairly by the members of the sergeant at arms committee anytime in 2008! If someone felt they were unjustly fined, picked on, not fined enough, not picked on enough, they owed a buck! (Basically everyone should have paid!) He also fined Larry Doyle's table for not being able to name three newly elected members to our 2009-2010 board of directors. **Good haul Garfield!**

Noteworthy Notes and Announcements:

As always, there were several announcements. Between member announcements and happy bucks it was so nice to hear updates on many of our past exchange students. **Carole Leiche** from Brazil has now graduated as a lawyer in her home country and sent us greetings. (No billing attached.) As well, **Masha** and **Fabio** (our students from last year and the year before) also sent specific greetings to the club. It is great how these young people stay connected and attached. Each will one day make great Rotarians (if invited). Mike French also promoted the need for 2-3 night positions still to be filled for the casino with our partner organization, whom we promised to raise money for through casinos, **Habitat for Humanity**. Please contact Mike if you can work these shifts. **Karl's Motive-Action Casino** was also this past weekend and I am sure they did well! And remember, our own casino is in March, dates still to be published!

President Lynne also announced that there **will NOT be a regular Friday meeting on Friday, February 13**, since all of us that are in town that day will most likely be delivering Strawberry Shortcakes! That is our delivery date for Strawberry Shortcakes. Also, since **RI President D.K. Lee** will be in Calgary on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 24-25, for special events including a dinner for all local Rotarians involved with our Integrity Awards, there will be no regular club meetings for any of the clubs that week. All Rotarians are encouraged to attend the D.K. Lee Dinner on Tuesday, February 24, as your regular meeting. Thus, **NO MEETING Friday, February 20**, either.

President Lynne announced that she had (and showed us) a beautiful picture and plaque given to us by **Rotary Challenger Park** for our commitment to this ongoing project. Lynne noted that her wall of honour in her washroom was full and so she wanted to show the club the wonderful gift and will look for a permanent location for its viewing. It should be noted that **Ron Jones** and **Chris Davis** have been the driving forces behind not only our ongoing participation with Rotary Challenger Park but also on the board at the Park. Ron still sits as a board member of Rotary Challenger Park.

An announcement was made about the **Peace Photo Contest** and information on the contest was available at the tables. This is an event sponsored by our club, and the finalist photos will be presented (as well as the winner of the contest) at the District Conference in April in Canmore. For more details or information speak to Mike French or **Steve Rickard** or visit www.rotarianpeacephoto.org. The closing date to enter this contest (with a winner purse of \$500) is March 13, 2009, so enter early!

Marie Rickard reminded us that our annual major fundraiser, **Strawberry Shortcakes**, is up and running. Order forms are available on-line at www.strawberryshortcakes.ca/. Be sure to encourage your friends, family and business relations to order lots! There is also a need for drivers for delivery as well as people to assemble fork and napkin bags. The team also needs support ringing through credit card transactions. If you can help in any of these areas, please contact **Ron Brookes** or Marie Rickard as soon as possible.

Our inbound exchange student, **Valerie**, was not present this past week and we look forward to her update on January 16.

Our Guest Speaker – Thomas from The Lost Boys of Sudan

What a moving presentation. Many of us have heard of the “Lost Boys of Sudan”, but few have experienced the opportunity to hear the story from one of them. Thomas had no notes, no slides and no prompter. He told the story from his memory: Thomas was a Lost Boy of Sudan.

He spoke of why the “boys and girls were lost”, what path they followed to get to where they are today and the result of that path and what the future holds. He noted that with the outbreak of the war in Sudan in 1983 the terror really began in 1987 when Thomas was 12! Thousands of boys and girls were removed from their parents and forced out of the country to seek shelter and safety. After having walked as a group over 1000 kilometres, they arrived in Ethiopia where they settled into a UN Refugee Camp. In 1991, they were driven from there by rebels in a civil war in that country as well. They walked again (really ran) as rebels chased them from Ethiopia. Reaching a river with fear of being slaughtered by those who chased them, they jumped into the river. Many did not survive as they could not swim or were eaten by alligators. Those that survived were able to make it to Kenya to reside in yet another UN Refugee Camp. Then, a Kenyan rebel tribe kidnapped many of them and murdered them. Finally, in 2001, the governments of Australia, USA and Canada felt something had to be done to help these boys and girls. Australia and the US both accepted over 3000 lost boys and girls of Sudan and these children were transported en mass with no prior screening or otherwise (true humanitarian work) to safe homes and environments in these two countries. Canada accepted 600 of these refugees. They were each individually screened and then brought to Canada one at a time over a period of several years.

Thomas arrived in Canada, in Winnipeg, on November 17, 2003. Shortly thereafter he was moved to Calgary where he has settled since. He spoke of the hardships they encountered on the trek, including having to learn the other boys’ and girls’ languages. When they were driven from Sudan they were from different tribes and groups, all speaking different dialects. They shared a single spoon to eat. Thomas noted how different it is today where he can eat fruit when he wishes as he removes it from a fridge!

Thomas and others (60 residing in Calgary) formed the Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan Association of Calgary. They hope to raise awareness and one day be able to return to their homeland to help others. The war is over, but still many suffer and Thomas and his peers want to be able to help those who still suffer. Thomas also noted that in 2005, at the end of the war in Sudan, he was able to discover that his parents are both still alive and that he has corresponded with them.

His is a pretty amazing story and truly the making of a great Rotarian.

For more information on The Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan, visit <http://soci.ucalgary.ca/home/news/the-lost-boys-sudan> or Google “Lost Boys of Sudan”.

Upcoming Meetings:

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

February 13: No meeting

February 20: No Meeting