

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

November 13, 2009 Edition: 43. 19 Reporter: Lynne Thornton Publisher: David Williams



Bill Tapuska was the scheduled reporter for today, but he got triple booked and opted to sit at the head table and introduce our interesting guest speaker. So . . .

With several guests present, **President Karl Herzog** got the meeting underway after more than one whack on the bell. **Don Axford** led us in *O Canada* and **Brian Stalwick** delivered a terrific invocation.

Sergeant-at-Arms Barootes appeared to be taking bribes from tables so they could head for the chow line first. We had to remind him the scribe's table goes right after the head table so the scribe can wolf down lunch before note taking starts.

The scribe's table was almost an all female table, with some delightful guests, but at the last minute we welcomed **Sam Switzer** - he's welcome anytime, anywhere. **Memory Chazeza, Christie Johnson and Donna Johnson** were guests of **Marie Rickard** at my table. Memory and Christie are the amazing founding force behind the "**Malawi Girls on the Move**" school in, of course, Malawi. Calgary West presented a cheque to them for **\$1,000** as the school continues to grow both with school rooms and dormitories, and girls sponsored and enrolled. Marie had taken them on a speaking tour of Rotary clubs in southern Alberta. They left directly following our meeting to head north to Edmonton and the rest of District 5360 for the final two weeks of their five-week fundraising and awareness tour.

Interesting lunch menu this week: we were offered two salads, roast potatoes, a vegetable medley, liver and onions, spaghetti and meatballs. I love liver and onions as long as I don't have to cook it, but there were lots of "yeowwwwww"s. It was very tasty, with a lovely gravy to boot. A plate of fruit and squares appeared on each table.

Seated at President Karl's head table were: **Bob Kerr**, to thank guest speaker, **Ezra Levant**, and **Bill Tapuska** to introduce Ezra. **Bob Hamshaw** and **Brian Stalwick** joined President Karl stage right at the table. An august group, indeed.

Visitors and guests were properly introduced by **Larry Doyle**, who didn't murder any of the difficult names, familiar or not.

This being “membership month” the said committee set up a table near the bar to answer questions and accept cheques on behalf of the Calgary Rotary Clubs Foundation and the Rotary International Foundation. **Just a reminder that the club matches your donation to either foundation up to \$200 per year. The exchange rate for your RI contribution is \$1.03. Make your cheque payable to: Rotary Foundation (Canada).** Bob Hamshaw and **Dan Doherty** manned the tables this week.

We had a cheque presentation to **Lou Zagannelli**, the executive director for **Hull Homes**, by Dan Doherty. We’ve maintained a partnership with Hull Homes for 20 years. Lou thanked us for the tradition and the strong relationship. Our \$5,000 will assist in their outdoor recreation programme. Lou had a neat quote from an eight year old: “Love is what’s in the room at Christmas when you stop opening presents.”

Dan stayed at the mike to give us an update on the home building project in **Ensanada**, Mexico. Two homes will be built in February, with the first home sponsored by Calgary West Rotary and the second funded by interested parties. Dan only needs to raise \$2,000 more for the second home. It looks like a group of young cancer survivors, as part of their leadership programme, will be the builders of the second home. About 14 young people will help with the build and in raising funds. Interesting new development.

Stan Beveridge reminded us about our Christmas Party in the evening at the Calgary Golf and Country Club (more later).

Joe Klassen reminded us to get our Grey Cup tickets from **Ted Valentine**.

Feed the Hungry is November 22 at St. Mary’s Hall. We’re sharing duties this year with St. Steven’s church. Sharing duties and also the cost. Contact **Don Alexander**.

As a repeat of last week, **Robyn Braley** won the 50/50 of \$22. He said he’d been taking lessons from **Don Bateman**.

Brent Barootes was sergeant-at-arms and dinged President elect **Sa’adat Keshavjee** the princely sum of \$5.00 for being too early in the lunch line. Yikes! A whole table antied up \$2.00 a piece for “early” getting inline privileges. Now follow this closely: **Chuck Morrison** paid a loonie because “it isn’t true”, **Ron Morrison** paid a buck because he allegedly started a rumor that said Chuck was going to be club secretary next year, and Brent fined himself \$20.00 for taking it one step further and writing it in the Westerner!

GUEST SPEAKER

Bill Tapuska introduced Ezra Levant as a lawyer, journalist, author and political activist. Ezra was the founding publisher of the Western Standard news magazine. In 2006, that magazine published the **Danish cartoons** of Mohammed – the only media in Canada to do so. That step led to a **900-day** prosecution for “hate speech” by the government of Alberta’s Human Rights commission. Levant wrote about that experience, and what he learned about human rights commissions, in his best-selling book “Shakedown”, now in its fourth paperback edition!

Ezra filled us in on the background of the infamous Danish cartoons that sent shock waves around the world, not for their content, but for the reaction from some quarters in the Muslim world, and what happened to him right here in Alberta.

The cartoons were originally drawn with the intended use in a child’s version of the Koran. There were 12 in all, ten being pretty plain Jane children’s illustrations. Two might have been considered a little more “edgy”, but even then you’d have to work at that interpretation. However, in a theology class in a Danish university, a radical Muslim student took umbrage with the cartoons and the proverbial hit the fan.

In the West, we make fun in political cartoons in the leading newspapers of our politicians, religious leaders, celebrities, community leaders, etc., etc., on a regular basis and think nothing of it. Without that kind of humour, talk shows of many stripes would be dead, to say nothing of comedy shows and comedians on TV or the stage. We consider that an integral part of our freedom of speech.

In Denmark, two Danish Muslim Imams, who objected to Mohammad being depicted in any way, let alone in a “humorous” way, took the original Danish cartoons, added three “fake” and obscene cartoons to the mix, and took them around the world to stir up anger and hatred toward the western world.

At the same time, a couple of things happened. A top level politician was assassinated in Syria, and Iran was accused of building nuclear bombs. Suddenly there were “spontaneous” protests in the streets over cartoons the people had never seen, and in countries where protests were officially banned. The riots killed over 200 people and became front page news over the “outrage” of the Muslim world about the Danish cartoons. The West considered the riots a convenient cover-up for domestic doings.

So to shorten the story somewhat, Ezra considered the original Danish cartoons to be pretty innocent and, after all the fuss, people here might like to see them for themselves. He published them in his Western Standard magazine. No other media in the West had published them because there were death threats bandied about from some quarters of the Muslim world.

On February 13, 2006, Ezra was challenged by a Muslim Imam from Pakistan, living in Canada, to a debate on local CBC radio. He didn't like Ezra's answers or reasons for publishing the cartoons, (“and probably that I am a Jew didn't help”). The next thing he knew, Ezra got a call from the Alberta government Human Rights Commission and found himself accused of being a “hate speech criminal”. It took 15 lawyers on the Human Rights Commission 900 days and \$500,000 to prosecute Ezra under a section that reads that he was “likely to expose a person to hatred or contempt”. It cost Ezra \$100,000 to defend himself. “There is no winning, only degrees of losing.”

In 32 years, the Human Rights Commission has had 100% conviction rate. Ezra is the sole exception. “We have less rights under the human rights laws than murders.” He called this the “soft jihad of ‘lawfare’ where it only takes one complaint from one person to set off having to defend oneself in our free country.” One complaint! The Imam did not have to pay any costs for his erroneous accusation of an ultimately innocent person.

Ezra recommends getting rid of the Human Rights Commission in a country like Canada where we have a very homogeneous population. He feels group peer pressure is more effective than formalized government laws. We need to take into account everyone is “the odd man out” at sometime, but political correctness has gone mad.

“After all 600,000 – 700,000 Muslims have come to Canada to be free.”

Bob Kerr thanked Ezra for being a man of principle, and presented him with his second Boltman.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

All agreed it was a very early start to the Christmas season, but the Calgary Golf and Country Club get you in the festive mood as soon as you come down their hill. The trees all over the property are lavishly strung with bright lights. Snow makes it even more fun, but we don't have to have the snow, trust me!

Des DeFreitas started off the evening introducing **Michael Hope** and his sterling accompanist. Michael's voice is rich and mellow and we loved his seasonal songs. He had to dash off to play lead bassoon in the Calgary Philharmonic concert. He's a wonderful Calgary West Christmas tradition.

Chris Davis (the "real" MC) turned up late because he hadn't read the time in the Westerner. But he made up for it with a heartfelt toast to **Verneil Martin** for making the venue possible and for the handmade truffles at each place. Chris allowed as how there would be "truffle trouble" if we filched our neighbour's truffle. You had to be there.

Des led us in singing some old favorite Christmas songs. The exchange students, all 10, were invited to the mike to tell about how Christmas differs in their home land from here, or if Christmas is celebrated or not. (India, not, Taiwan is more for Chinese New Year.) They also wished us a Merry Christmas in their mother tongue.

We had a choice of turkey or salmon for our main course, a small tureen of pumpkin cream soup, a beautifully presented salad, the main course, followed by crême brulee, accompanied by a tray of gingersnaps and shortbread cookies. Yum!!!

President Karl thanked the committee, plus Jane Beveridge, Eileen DeFreitas and Verneil Martin for the table decorations.

DJ music followed and the dancing began. Everyone had a terrific time socializing and dancing and enjoying the fellowship together!

Editor's Note: Verneil has asked me to convey *her* thanks to those who helped to make the Christmas party such a great success. The following is not meant to be in order of importance!

Jane Beveridge Eileen DeFreitas	For the decorations.
Marg Henschel Helen King Stan Beveridge	For ticket sales.
Chris Davis	For being the MC.
Don Axford	For saying grace and for being at the piano.
Des DeFreitas	For leading the singing.
Marie Rickard	For organizing the exchange students.
Michael Hope	For his entertainment.

A SAD NOTE – Ted Valentine's sister passed away on Sunday, November 15. The service is in Edmonton, November 18.

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER	FOUNDATION MONTH
November 13	Ezra Levant – Human Rights Commissions
November 13	Christmas ball in the evening
November 20	Tim Anderson speaking on the south west ring road from the point of view of the T'su Tina
November 27	George Hansen – Calgary Stampeder Alumni – Grey Cup Meeting
DECEMBER	FAMILY MONTH
December 4	Club Assembly and Elections
December 11	Dr Charles Samuels – Sleep Deprivation and Human Performance

December 18	Westmount Charter School – Christmas Choir
Sunday December 20	Christmas Brunch at Pinebrook Golf and Country Club
December 25	Christmas Day – No Meeting
JANUARY	ROTARY AWARENESS MONTH
January 1	New Years Day – No Meeting
January 8	Tim Morgan – Co-Founder of WestJet – WestJet and the Airline Industry
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