

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, Margot McDermott
Bernie Ward, David Williams

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Alberta Children's Hospital

A "Field Trip" to Remember

Our meeting today was away from the familiar confines of the Holiday Inn.

On entering the Children's Hospital "campus", one is immediately struck by the sheer size of this new facility, the bright colors and the differing architecture of each of the separate buildings.

A good place to start is "Public Parking" which leads you to the entrance foyer of the main hospital. Our Rotarians amazingly found our way to the fourth floor gathering area by following **Bryden Horwood** who seemed to have an unerring sense of direction, up elevators and down hallways. We were greatly impressed, at least until we learned that Bryden was merely following the sandwich cart on its way to our meeting.

And what great sandwiches! We didn't "brown bag" it, we "brown boxed" it! Sandwiches with assorted fillings from "Loaf and Kettle" complete with salad and juice, hearty and healthy.

We took our lunch in a teaching theatre. **Des DeFreitas** led us in "O Canada" with the invocation by **Stan Beveridge**. **President Karl** welcomed our group with opening comments while **Jim Barnes** carefully checked off the list to make sure there were no free lunches.

Jim's count was 43 members and guests, many of whom were spouses of our Rotarians.

We were welcomed by our hostess, **Sheelagh** (name badges only had first names), who described the building as a "healing place" for kids and family and a place to provide a feeling of support and solace. It is a "state of the art" facility in North America and recognized that our children deserve the "best" with a "raised standard of care".

Sheelagh's presentation included a DVD made by staff of "Global TV" featuring lots of children describing the facilities. The DVD showed interviews describing chemo treatments, transfusions and

other procedures. A lot of the focus was on “Kids Cancer”, bone marrow transplants, Hodgkins lymphoma and the sad statistic that 20% of kids don’t survive despite the advanced care. All to the musical background of “All You Need Is Love”.

After the DVD, there was a photo-op of the whole group which was akin to herding cats, but we got it done. We then were joined by two other hostess and were divided into 3 groups to tour the hospital.

Our hostess described the special designs based on extensive interviews with parents and children. Special attention was given to air conditioning for fresh air to eliminate the usual hospital smell. Special treatment was also given to windows. The four panel windows throughout the building were especially selected because children “draw windows that way”. All children’s rooms are on the west side of the building which has the best view of the mountains. Other offices and treatment facilities are on the east side.

The “in-patient” building is in an “X” pattern with support staff, recreation areas and other facilities located at the intersection on each floor. There are numerous “play rooms” designed to be “homelike” but still therapeutic in nature. Art work decorated the hallways, much of which was prepared by the patients including self-portraits.

In each hospital room, there is an additional bed for parents to stay and sleep over.

There is a room for “sacred space” for multi religious and reflective purposes.

The philosophy of the hospital is “family centered care” with provisions for families to be closely involved with the healing process.

Our hospital accommodates children from southern Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

An extensive library with online resources is available to families staffed by resource specialists to help deal with illnesses.

Our hostess described three main facilities, the hospital for active care, the Ronald McDonald House to provide accommodation for parents and the Rotary-Flames House, a paediatric hospice.

The Rotary-Flames House is a separate building, just newly built and ready to be occupied in October. We were greeted by the Medical Director, Dr Marlie Robertson. The home is one of three in Canada and one of six in North America.

It is an “end of life” facility designed to be “like a home”. There is 24/7 care with “planned respite” for parents to get away for short breaks.

There are 11 beds, including two suites. Only seven beds will be occupied until more funding is available from the government. The suites have two bedrooms, one for the child in a fully medically equipped room extremely well disguised to look like a child’s home bedroom. The other bedroom has a king-sized bed for parents and other children. The suite is completed with a small kitchen and sitting area, although meals can be brought up from the main kitchen.

There are numerous recreation rooms, very well audio/visually equipped.

There is a sun room and a light house, all designed for children in palliative care.

It is truly impressive, a remarkable facility and easily the highlight of the field trip.

It is called Rotary-Flames House and our club along, with two other Rotary clubs in the city through the Rotary-Flames Foundation, have provided funding for the special equipment and facilities in the building. Our club's commitment is to operate three casinos, starting 2010, and contribute the proceeds (approximately \$250,000) to the Rotary Flames Foundation.. What a bargain for all that is being done!

There will be an official opening in the near future. Don't miss it, if you can!

This was a great and memorable field trip. Meetings may be less emotionally charged in comparison after this one! Thanks to **Ted Valentine** for the arrangements!

Coming Events

September 18	Kevin Nevue – CEO, Precision Drilling
September 25	Laura Lockman – USA Consul General in Calgary
October 2	Becky Scott – Bleeding Art Industries (Movie/TV Special Effects)
October 9	Bruce Cameron – A View of Calgary Municipal Politics
October 16	Lisa (Longball) Vlooswyk – Canadian Women's Golf Longball Champion
October 23	MLA Ron Liepert, Minister of Health for Alberta
October 30	"The Great Houdini" – A Hallowe'en Surprise