



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE



Rotary

The Lakeshorian

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MONTREAL-LAKESHORE

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Tuesday

August 15

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This Week's Program...

Ryan Rowe, Global Peace Ambassador, will talk about the Global Peace Index (GPI), which monitors the progress of peace around the world and trends in "peacefulness".

The Global Peace Index ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. Produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the GPI is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness. The GPI report presents the most comprehensive data-driven analysis to date on the trends in peace, its economic value, and how to develop peaceful societies.

Birthdays and Anniversaries this week...

Happy Anniversary, Art and Helen Surette...

.....Saturday, August 19th!

Happy Birthday, George Saad.....Saturday, August 19th!

Future Programs...

Aug 22: **Joe Zemanovich** will talk about *Operation Smile*, the program to finance surgical correction of cleft lip.

Aug 29: **Wendy Gariepy**, West Island Mission's Operations Manager, will tell us how her organization provides **food assistance and other related aid to West Islanders** in need.

Sep 5: **NO MEETING** (during a statutory holiday week.)

Special Events...

Aug 28: (Monday) Graham Martin Memorial blood donor clinic, at the Kirkland Sports Complex from 12:30 to 8:30. Sign-up sheets for volunteers were sent out to members last week.

Sep 29-30 (Friday, Saturday) **District Conference, "Celebrating Our Service"**
Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort,
873 NY-37, Hogansburg, NY 13655

Oct. 20: (Friday) All Rotarians are invited to enjoy a special luncheon in Hartford, Connecticut, featuring **RI President Ian Riseley** and **Sylvia Whitlock**, Rotary's first woman club president (RC Duarte, CA), \$45 (USD) per person. See **Bill** for details.

Nov 3: (Friday) Our annual **Oyster Party**, at the home of the Baie d'Urfé Rescue Squad, 300 Surrey Drive, Baie d'Urfé. **This is the best Oyster Party on the West Island!** It will also be our biggest fundraising event of the fall. We're counting on **YOU** to sell lots of tickets this year, as we aim to match last year's amazing success.

Last Week's Meeting...

Sixteen members were present last week. Our speaker was **Maureen** on "Prejudging People, Right or Wrong?"

We were also pleased to welcome **Wayne**, President **Helen**, **Lawrence**, **Rosie**, **Stan**, **Bill**, **Murray**, **Semi**, **Glorefe**, **Anne**, **Knud**, **Brenda**, **Emily**, **Cameron**, and **Joe Zemanovich**, as well as our guests, **Jamie Motz**, guest of **Wayne**; **Kate Howard** (President Helen's daughter) and **Maria Khalip** who, as a potential new member, was a guest of the club. We also welcomed Honorary Member **Joe Maxwell**.

Club Secretary **Cameron** had some news from our district. For the Rotary year 2018-19, they are looking for volunteers to fill important positions, such as **District Committee Chairs** and **Assistant Governors**. Contact District Governor Elect **Martha Weaver** martha.weaver@gmail.com or 518-521-0214.

Murray entertained us with his "moment of mirth," riddles and mental quizzes from his 7- and 9-year-old grandchildren.

"A cowboy rode into town on Friday, stayed three days and rode out on Friday. How was that possible?" [President Helen knew it was because his horse was named Friday.]

"Railroad Crossing. Watch out for Trains!" Can you spell that without any R's? [Emily knew the answer: T-H-A-T]

"What has a face, two hands but no arms or legs?" [Anne had the answer: a clock.]

"What is light as a feather, yet you can't hold it for more than a few minutes?" [Cameron: Your breath.]

"What has three feet but can't walk?" [Stan had it: a yard.]

"What month has 28 days?" [Helen: All of them.]

"If I have it, I don't share it. If I share it, I don't have it. What is it?" [Nobody got it, so Murray had to tell us: a secret.]

"Name 3 consecutive days without using the words Tuesday, Friday or Sunday." [Another one that a child stumped us with. The answer: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.]

Knud won the opportunity to find the Ace of Spades but turned over the

Invited to introduce our speaker, her husband, **Lawrence** declared that **Maureen** needs no introduction to the members of this club.

Maureen first played a video called "Faceless" and explained that it was made by the granddaughter, Emily, of their friends Janet and Lol, when she was only 16.

Maureen explained that the video was not related in any way to the topic she would be speaking about, but she wanted us to see what an enterprising young person can do. [The video is larger than 1.5 GB, do we can't make it available for download here, or even include it on our website. *Ed.*] It goes without saying that the video project was well done. It highlighted a few days in the life of a teenager, without ever showing us her face. Not as easy a task as it may seem.

Maureen's subject was "pre-specified" but might have been entitled, "By what right does society prejudge a person before knowing anything about that person?"

"We see a homeless man and we may see him as a good-for-nothing layabout, before we know a single fact about him.

"What right do we have to prejudice? Why is our first reaction not 'What can we do to help?'"

"A few weeks ago I met a lovely young man who was very, very hungry. I talked to him and learned that he was homeless, that he had lost everything. He had been to Afghanistan three times, as a soldier, a computer expert. When he was no longer able to serve another tour of duty he tried to ply his trade at home. But he couldn't cope; he had PTSD. Lost his home; lost his job; lost everything.

"He was homeless. But he wasn't homeless because he was a drug addict or a layabout. He was homeless because he had acquired a mental illness, and we prejudice mental illness.

"Why do we prejudice mental illness? We all do it. There is a stigma attached to the very term, 'mental illness'.

"There is a young lady here in this room. I assume from the way you are dressed that you are Muslim."

"Yes, I am," Ms. Khalip replied.

"It doesn't matter. Your religion or beliefs are yours and I do not prejudice them, or you because of them, or because they may not be the same as my religious beliefs. It doesn't matter.

"My Mom prejudged Lawrence because he never went to church. He was a non-believer but I didn't care. He was the person that I loved...and I love him even more now than I did when I met him. But why should my Mom have prejudged him because he didn't go to church? Why didn't she see the person and, in time, come to know that he was a good person? He's got very high moral standards and very high principles. He just doesn't go to church. That's not important to me. His kindness and morality are what's important to me.

"What can we do to teach people not to prejudice? Lawrence knows I get on my soapbox about this. There was a homeless man in Manchester, England, outside the arena where the Ariana Grande concert was taking place. I watched an interview with him. After the explosion he stayed there for 24 hours, helping people, hailing taxis, helping out-of-towners find their way to their hotels. And the interviewer asked him, 'Why did you do this?' 'I might be homeless,' he replied, 'but I'm not heartless.' And yet there were people out on the street who saw him near the arena, begging, and they were quick to prejudice him.

"I know I'm on my soapbox but I really think we should look at people and think, 'You could be a nice person.' Imagine how much more friendly this world would be.

"Now, what can we do as a Rotary club? How can we help people stop prejudging others?"

Helen said, "I don't know about as a Rotary club, but as individuals we all have preconceived ideas because we all grew up in a certain way, and listened to our parents. I came from the UK which, in my opinion now is a country with lots of mixed races. But people of my parents' generation were very racist. It's not because they were horrible people; it's circumstances and the way life evolved in that country. We have to open our minds and open our hearts. We're all equal here; none of us is any better than anybody else. Some people have one religion; others have another. It doesn't mean that one is right and one is wrong. We have to learn to be more accepting in general."

Joe Z said, "This lady (Kim Michaels) who wrote The Power of Self said that self-respect frees us from the expectations of others, so much so that we almost say, 'How could they not realize this?' and from that comes labelling and prejudging."

"I just hate it when people prejudice others," Maureen said.

Lawrence said, "I was terrible about prejudging people. My daughter, when she was Vice-President of the manufacturer of Suboxone, the methadone-like drug used to help heroin addicts detox, she learned about his young lady, 22 or 23, who was a real heroin addict. When Tina asked her what led her to go onto drugs, she was told that her father, who was a serious heroin addict, started injecting her with heroin when she was 13, so he could sell her as a prostitute. That story really opened my eyes about people. It stopped me from prejudging others. You see this 20-something person with a serious drug addiction problem and you're inclined to say, 'What a silly so-and-so!' when you don't really know the reason why she is what she is."

Emily said, "Yes, we do tend to prejudice people, but I think the real problem occurs when that prejudging leads to action. When we served people at the Old Brewery Mission, we saw the different demeanours of those people. Some were open; others were closed in. It was hard not to prejudice people standing in line at a mission that serves meals to people from all walks of life."

Maureen said, "That's true. The young man I was talking about earlier, I met him at the Old Brewery Mission."

Stan said, "We have to draw a line between prejudging and first impressions. When you interview for a job, the first impression you make is crucial. In almost everything in life, snap judgments happen, whether we like it or not."

Maureen said, "I understand, Stan. In the UK I had a boss who could not stand Welsh people. He wouldn't employ anyone who was Welsh. He also would not hire a boy who wore white socks to an interview."

Cameron said, "You asked why we prejudice people. I think part of the reason is because of life's competitiveness. I came from a farming community. In a chicken house if there is one chicken that is not as healthy as the others, the whole flock will turn on that chicken. People are the same. We will jump on someone who appears to be weaker, because we want to be stronger. If we can prove that we're stronger, we can attack the weaker one. It's the evolution of societal aggressiveness."

Maureen agreed. "We live in a realistic world. Though we'd prefer to live in a perfect world, that's never going to happen. But I would like to think that, as a person, I can try harder not to judge a person until I get to know that person."

Cameron said he watched a program on BBC about Gander during 9/11. "A town of 9,000 people took 7,000 passengers they didn't know into their homes without prejudging. That is the most selfless of acts, so much so that it has been made into a Broadway hit musical, 'Come From Away.' "

Bill pointed out that we often prejudice people in a good way. "When you came to Canada, you and Lawrence prejudged this Rotary club as the one you wanted to join. You didn't bother looking further. Who knows? You might have found a club three times as good as this one. (Boos all around). Sometimes prejudging based on what you see is a good way to form a first impression."

There were several other comments about the inevitability as well as the dangers of prejudging people. **Stan** thanked Maureen for sharing her opinions, leading to an enlightening and thought-provoking discussion.

