



The Lakeshore

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Rotary



WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MONTREAL-LAKESHORE

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This Week's Program...

Brenda has invited **Kathryn Stephens**, Director, Development and Public Relations at **Welcome Hall Mission**, to bring us up to date on her organization's activities and role in the Montreal community.

Birthdays and Anniversaries this week...

.. none that we know of.

Future Programs...

Nov 28: **The Rotary Foundation** celebrates its centennial in 2017 and November is Rotary Foundation Month. Our speaker, **Past District Governor Bonnie Black**, will bring us up to date on the programs offered by The Rotary Foundation.

Dec 5: **Emily** has invited **Kemba Mitchell**, Chair of the West Island Black Community Association, to tell about its goals and activities.

Dec 12: **Cedars CanSupport**, at the MUHC, provides free, bilingual compassionate care and humanitarian support to cancer patients and their families.

Special Events...

Dec 8: Our annual **Christmas Party** will be hosted by **Andy and Kathleen**, at their home in Baie d'Urfé

Last Week's Meeting...

Our speaker was **Nikita Moriarity**, Director of LGBTQ West Island, who had agreed to tell us about the services they offer, as well as their plans and initiatives for the future.

We were seventeen members, including Honorary Member **Joe Maxwell**, one visiting Rotarian, **Oliver Blackman** from the **Amarillo East Rotary Club**, and one guest: **Esin Ergun**. Active members present were **Wayne, Helen, Lawrence, Maureen, Rosie, Stan, PDG Bill, Carol, Murray, Semi, Anne, Knud, Brenda, Cameron, Deniz** and **Joe Z**.

Maureen had details to share with us about this year's Christmas party. "It will be a pot-luck party this year and a "bring your own whatever-you-plan-to-drink" affair as well. If you're going to bring food, please email me with what you're going to bring. Then, if we're going to have too many salads or too many desserts or whatever, I can ask someone to change. Bring enough for 6 or 7 people so there won't be a lot of leftovers.

"I also want to tell you about an outbreak of black plague in Madagascar. This year's outbreak is quite bad, involving over 2000 cases of bubonic plague and the even deadlier pneumonic plague. One of our former members, Christian Randrianavony, is from Madagascar and the Antananarivo club supports our annual auction. [A bit of good news: WHO says there has not

been a new case or new hospitalization in 3 weeks and credits lessons learned from the Ebola epidemic of 2013-16 Ed.]

Knud reminded us that he is selling hams again this year. They are just \$25 each, payable in cash or by cheque payable to Rotary Club of Montreal-Lakeshore. Order them now (Deadline December 5th) and he will bring them to our December 12th meeting. **President Helen** urged us to approach our friends and neighbours, so we can give Knud as big an order as possible for this club fundraiser.

We had no fewer than four jokes last Tuesday! First off was **Knud** who said, "A husband and wife are arguing about who has to make coffee in the morning. The wife says 'You wake up before me, so you should do it.' The husband says 'It's part of the cooking so it's your responsibility.' 'No,' the wife says, 'It's in the bible that the man makes coffee.' The husband says, 'Prove it.' The wife goes and gets the bible and, sure enough, there it is: 'HEBREWS'."

Next was **Lawrence**: "A couple of nights ago I was out with some friends having a few drinks and let's say I may have had a few too many. Knowing that I was over the limit, I did something I had never done before, I took a bus home. Sure enough, I came upon a police road block, but they waved buses through. So I arrived home safely without incident, which was a real surprise, because I have never driven a bus before and I'm not sure where I got it."

Bill had one. "In light of the rising frequency of human—grizzly bear conflicts, the Department of Forestry, Parks and Wildlife is advising hikers to take extra precautions to avoid bears while in the field, by wearing noisy little bells on their clothing so as not to startle bears that aren't expecting them. They also suggest carrying pepper spray with them in case of an encounter with a bear.

"It is also a good idea to watch out for fresh signs of bear activity. Outdoorsmen should recognize the difference between black bear dung and grizzly bear dung: Black bear dung is smaller and contains lots of berries and squirrel fur. Grizzly bear dung has little bells in it and smells like pepper."

The last one was **Joe Maxwell**. "A 75-year-old man walked into a crowded waiting room and approached the desk. The Receptionist said, 'Yes sir, what are you seeing the Doctor for today?' 'There's something wrong with my dick', he replied.

"The receptionist became irritated and said, 'You shouldn't come into a crowded waiting room and say things like that. You should have said there is something wrong with your ear and discussed the problem further with the Doctor in private.'

"The man then decided to walk out, waited several minutes and then re-entered.

"The Receptionist smiled smugly and asked, 'Yes?' 'There's something wrong with my ear,' he stated loudly. The Receptionist nodded approvingly and smiled, knowing he had taken her advice. 'What is wrong with your ear, Sir?' 'I can't pee with it,' he replied. The waiting room erupted in laughter."

Murray gave us a short poetic excerpt from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*:

*This thing all things devours:
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;
Gnaws iron, bites steel;
Grinds hard stones to meal;
Slays king, ruins town,
And beats high mountains down.*

"What is it?"

Murray acknowledged that **Anne** had supplied this little riddle. So, as no one could guess the right answer he asked Anne to tell us.

"Time," she replied.

After **Murray** gave us our "Two heads, two tails or a head and a tail" exercise program, **President Helen** introduced our guest speaker.

Nikita Moriarity is the Director of the West Island LGBTQ Youth Centre. Prior to accepting this position, she was Executive Director of the Chimo Helpline, The Provincial Suicide Help Line for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. For the last seven years Nikita has had multiple jobs in the field of social services crisis intervention, including working in residential homes for youth and a clinical treatment facility in Moncton, New Brunswick for youth with mental health and behavioural issues. Nikita studied at Mount Allison University, in Sociology with a minor in Canadian Studies (First Nations and their Aboriginal Peoples). She plans to apply for her Master's in the social work program at McGill, that partners with the law program.

"She has been involved in Rotary in different capacities since high school, including becoming a Rotarian in 2012 with the Moncton Sunrise Rotary Club, acting as Vice Chair of the Fund-raising Committee at the Fredericton North Rotary Club.

"In her spare time she continues to play competitive senior women's soccer. She will be working with the Pointe-Claire Soccer Club as coach for young goalkeepers."

Nikita told us they had recently changed the name of the centre to the West Island LGBTQ2+ Centre. "The 2+ refers to Two-spirited, a person who has both a masculine and a feminine spirit. It is used by some First Nations people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.

"The LGBTQ Youth Centre was established in the West Island about seven years ago, running out of the Beaconsfield United Church on Woodside Road. It was receiving a lot of support, so it started to grow, bit by bit. They recently added a young adults group, for those in their early twenties. At the same time and in the same space the Rainbow Seniors Centre has been operating for about five years.

"Within the last year, before I came to Montreal, it was decided that the two different centres would amalgamate to make one centre. It didn't seem to make much sense to be operating almost the same services to two different age groups as two separate centres operating in the same space. So, after amalgamation we became the West Island LGBTQ2+ Centre.

"With that has come some funding for rebranding, being about to start to recreate an image for ourselves that clearly represents both the centres coming together.

"It has been challenging for me, having just moved to the Montreal area in June. Prior to that there was no director for four months. So, members of the staff and Board were filling in to keep things running smoothly. They had offered me this position in April but, coming from a different province, we had

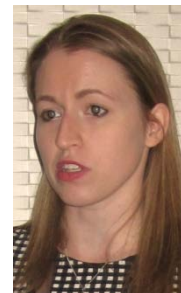
to delay my starting date, to give me time to uproot my life and move to a different province.

"So, while we've had a lot of challenges, we've had a lot of great successes as well.

"Our centre is not the only one here in the West Island that caters to the LGBTQ community. There are other great organizations that operate here on the West Island and that we partner with, but we are the only centre on the West Island that offers drop-in services. We're servicing over 200,000 people.

"We know that our youth groups are well attended and on a regular basis. They meet every Wednesday and Friday, from 4:30 till 8:30. Some just come and hang out. The centre has created a safe space for them, somewhere they can come and feel safe. Unfortunately, some of their parents are not supportive of the fact that they are LGBTQ, or that they're questioning their sexuality. Some of the kids who come to us have been kicked out of their homes, having been disowned by parents. Those are some of the challenges we face, with some of the youth especially. They're at that age when they can't get themselves an apartment on their own. They need a guardian or somebody who can vouch for them, because their family has cut ties with them.

"We also give youth writing workshops, showing them how to manage or cope with their feelings or emotions. Also, with the help of experts in the field, teach safe sex to youth, as the sex education they are getting at school tends to be heterosexually oriented.



"Right now we are seeing a lot of transgender youth coming through the centre. For some of you who may not know, transgender is when a person doesn't feel that their exterior, their assigned sex at birth, represents who they are inside. It's a male transitioning to a female, or a female transitioning to a male. There are different ways to go about doing that so, at the age of 8 doctors can give a youth hormone blockers that will slow down or stop the flow of testosterone or of estrogen, depending on the desired gender change. This will stop or delay the development of the existing exterior gender. It does not cause any real damage to the body. At the age of 16 they can actually start hormone treatment, i.e. males transitioning to female can be given estrogen and females transitioning to male can be given testosterone. Prior to that, they have been working with a psychiatrist as well, to ensure that they are prepared for the changes mentally as well as physically. Breast reduction or removal surgery is possible at age 16. Males or females desiring a sex change to their genitalia have to wait till age 18. Young adults who have already been through the transgender process are becoming helpful volunteers for the youth group, which could number 14 to 17 at a time.

"Young adults meet at the Centre from 8:30 to 10:30.

"We are also seeking funding to help us add a musical component, for those who want to learn a musical instrument or may wish to express themselves musically.

"We are also aware that members of the LGBTQ community—youth, adults and seniors—are 13% more at risk for suicide than their peers, even higher for transgender persons.

"We are experiencing particular difficulty to tap into the senior population. Many will not come out of the closet because the age and time when they grew up were very different than

today. The conversation was not as open. Many who are now in seniors homes were exploring their sexuality when it was still criminalized. Moreover, in some seniors' facilities they are not being recognized but are being pushed back into the closet.

"Our seniors drop-in is every Thursday. We do a barbecue when weather permits. At this time of year we do a pot-luck instead. We have seniors coming from the South Shore, the North Shore and from downtown, because we are one of the only LGBTQ centres offering services to seniors. Other centres focus on youth and young adults.

"So we are trying to get the word out about the services we offer, in many ways, including speaking to Rotary clubs. The United Church of Canada has been very helpful as well, and last year Telus gave us a grant to create an Internet Café, which all age groups use. We have computers on site where they can check their emails or whatever else they need to do. Quite a few seniors use our computers.

"We are rebranding; we're in the end stages of finalizing a logo that will represent us to our satisfaction. A great graphic designer has been working very closely with us and a new web site is also in the works, to better showcase the services we offer.

"Unfortunately, we are in a bit of a rut right now, having gone four months without a director. Our previous director exited quite suddenly, with some loss of information in the transition. We are also at the end of a \$25,000 grant over three years, to fund our youth program, which is our most well-attended. We are trying to find creative ways to recover from that loss, so we can keep our youth program going. We used to have a gala, with a silent auction. When I arrived on the scene I found the gala was too expensive for very little gain. It didn't bring many people in, other than people who were already connected to the centre. So this year, with the support of my Board, I decided to scrap the gala. In its place we moved our fundraiser from the fall to the spring, and we will do a Casino Night. It will be held in May, and will have seven gaming tables of Roulette and Blackjack and poker. We already have interest in sponsoring tables; we're looking for overhead sponsors as well. We'll still have the silent auction, with items like Montreal Canadiens tickets, signed jerseys, sticks, et cetera.

"This year I'm hoping to get the Canada women's national hockey team to give us a team jersey signed by the team members.

"We know that fundraising is a big thing and we only had the gala. With a Casino Night, we can keep costs low, so we're looking at only \$50 a ticket. So we're hoping that it will bring in new people and generate new interest in the Centre.

"I come from a fundraising background and I have the ability to do presentations. I'm very networking-savvy and feel I can bring back the profit side of the ledger so we can manage and maintain and create sustainability. We just completed our three-year planning session, which was very well received. No big surprises. We made a strategic plan, so we're all on the same page, and we now have a clearer picture of where we want to go. We've also revised our vision, our mission statement, and we're doing a whole revamp of our organization. It has been a lot of work but I hope it will pay off in the long run.

"A few years ago we created a Parents Support Group. Every first Tuesday of the month a group of parents meet for an hour to an hour and a half, facilitated by a parent. It has my support so I usually drop in and sometimes add a personal touch. Right now the six members of the group are all parents of trans-

gender youth. We are fortunate to have a person attending regularly whose youth is now an adult and living on her own. She comes to share her experience of what it was like as a parent going through a youth who was transitioning.

"With our rebranding and marketing initiatives we expect to see an increase in the number of youth and young adults and, hopefully, the number of seniors who come out, because that's what puts butts in the seats. We know that we're making a difference in the community as well, and that is what helps us sustain ourselves. We need the money from fundraising to ensure they will continue to have this safe place to come to.

"We work a lot with schools to help establish gay-straight alliances in the schools. Since I've arrived I have made three different presentations to school administrators, about how to create a more inclusive environment in the school for LGBTQ, including creating gender-neutral bathrooms and that kind of thing. We're getting more and more demands there as well, 'Can you come and talk to our staff?' 'Can you speak to our Grade 9 students to set up gay-straight alliances?'

"And I'm proud to say that, on December 2nd and 3rd, we will be offering a suicide intervention course. I'm trained as a facilitator through LivingWorks to do that. I plan to certify at least 15 people in suicide intervention.

"There has been a big demand for that within the LGBTQ community. I plan to do another such course in the spring for people for whom a December date didn't work out."

Nikita ended her presentation at that point and invited questions. **Stan** asked, "How much financial support do you get from the admittedly wealthy LGBTQ community in Montreal?" "None," Nikita replied. "That doesn't make sense," Stan commented. "We know they come out in large numbers for the parade every August. Why don't they support your initiatives?"

Nikita responded that at this point in her new position she doesn't know why that financial support is not forthcoming but it might be worth exploring as part of the fundraising program.

Joe Zemanovich asked what is being done to incorporate the LGBTQ information into the existing sex education courses given in West Island high schools. Nikita replied that those courses are given by a nurse and that she has an appointment to meet with that nurse in late December to discuss that very issue.

Helen asked how many paid staff she had. "Just myself and one paid part-time youth coordinator," Nikita replied.

Asked about volunteers, Nikita said there are a few but she hopes to recruit more, especially for fundraising, but for other duties as well.

Bill said he has a gay cousin who is a chef and he knows a lot of other gay men. "They're all such nice guys—polite, warm-hearted. Why don't they give courses in being nice to straight men, many of whom are not as nice as their gay counterparts?"

Nikita was thanked by **Cameron** for a very interesting and informative talk about a subject we seem to know very little about. "Thank you for educating us about your community, Nikita," he added.



Knud has sent us the following request...

We just received this e-mail from Vicki Horsfield of "Creating Opportunities for Guatemalans." Our Club has been supporting a Dental Medicine/equipment pack and a Physician Travel Pack going to "Creating Opportunities for

Guatemalans," the former arriving via 'Operation Walk' and the latter taken there by Maricarmen from HPIC, who is currently in Guatemala.

The young children pictured are from a recently started pre-school class, to prepare young kids for school next year.

Vicki writes:

"I spent a wonderful day yesterday with Maricarmen from HPIC. We picked her and her daughter up in the capital, along with the boxes of medicine, and brought them back to our organization so they could see our programs in action. She gave each of the kids one of the crocheted doll that they use to pack the medicine boxes. Then we got together with the doctor who is going to do the medical clinics for our families so that he could see the contents of the boxes. Maricarmen also suggested that we use some of the contents of the boxes to set up a first aid kit to keep on hand in our facility, which I will do. We will probably wait till after Christmas do organize our medical clinic.

"We are still waiting for a date from the municipality for the use of the dental space in order to have our dental clinic. They are sending us round and round but we will eventually get it, I am sure. Maricarmen had a chance to see the dental boxes sitting beside my desk.

"Please extend our gratitude to all the members of your club for their generous donation to make it possible for us to receive the HPIC boxes of medical and dental supplies!! These supplies are going to be an immense help our families and other families in our village who don't have funds to go to the doctor/dentist or pay for medicine.

