



The Lakeshore

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MONTREAL-LAKESHORE
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This Week's Program...

David Leduc, Old Brewery Mission's *Executive Director of Development*, will talk to us about OBM's major gifts fundraising program.

Birthdays and Anniversaries this week...

...none that we know of.

Future Programs...

Nov 7: [Evening meeting] **Murray** has invited six high school teachers and counsellors to join him and his Youth Committee at 5 pm for a meeting to discuss how we might collaborate to assist West Island students with volunteer community activities. They have also been invited to stay for our evening meeting and meal.

Nov 14: **Nikita Moriarity**, Director, LGBTQ, will tell us about the services they offer on the West Island, as well as future programs, and initiatives.

Nov 21: **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.

Special Events...

Nov 3: (Friday, starting at 7 pm) 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 or exceed last year's amazing success.

Last Week's Meeting...

Tuesday, October 24th was **World Polio Day**, so President Helen took charge of the program.

Twenty members and guests were on hand for this special meeting. Present were **Wayne, President Helen, Stan, PDG Bill, Murray, Semi, Glofe, JP, Anne, Sade, Knud, Brenda, Emily, Cameron, Deniz** and **Joe Zemanovich**, plus Honorary member **Joe Maxwell**. We were also pleased to welcome **Ezin Ergun**, guest of Deniz, **Angelita Valenta**, guest of Brenda and **Maria Westaway**, guest of the club.

Among the announcements...

- **Cameron** told us that **Elvis** is coming to Howick November 10th at the United Church, 2 Bridge Street, Howick. If you want to see Elvis, see Cameron for tickets. They're \$20 each.
- **Semi** asked members, when writing a cheque to the club, to "please indicate what the payment is for, i.e. dues, meals, guests' meals, et cetera. That would be very helpful for me."
- **Brenda** reminded us that the sock drive is still on, for the seniors at the Denis-Benjamin-Viger residence on Île-Bizard

and the kids at La Corde Youth Centre. I have received some socks and other donations today but more are needed.

- The food drive is on for our Christmas baskets.
- On November 15th we have a luncheon on behalf of the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation, open to all volunteers. Joe Maxwell will be joining us for that.
- We have received a request from Ste-Anne Hospital, formerly known as the Veterans Hospital in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue. They need volunteers for two upcoming events: Their Christmas party, when volunteers will help move patients from their rooms to the auditorium for a 2-hour party. **Rosie** has already agreed to help with that.
- We also have a date for our gift wrapping shift at Fairview. It will be on Thursday, December 7th. Five of us have signed up to help with that event, to help the LGH Foundation.

Brenda had a Certificate of Appreciation to present to **Maria Westaway** "She first assisted us for the food bank at the Welcome Hall Mission and she enjoyed it so much she has become a permanent volunteer every Wednesday. She has also us at The Teapot seniors' residence in Lachine."



Maria thanked us for this recognition. "I very much enjoy volunteering. I've been doing it since I was married, which was a very long time ago. You get to meet people and volunteering is very rewarding. So thank you very much."

Bill had a short joke for us. "Two American visitors to Wales drove into a town with the name **Llanfairpwllgwyngyll** on the sign as they entered the town. They had no idea how to pronounce this Welsh word and wondered how they would find out. They decided to stop for a bite and they asked the blond waitress who served them, "Can you tell us the name of this place, and please say it slowly, so we get the pronunciation right." "Sure," she replied. "It's called Burr-rrr-gurr-rrr-kinng"

Murray shared his Moment of Mirth with us. We must be getting better because he got answers to most of the riddles he had learned from his 10-year-old grandchild.

Bill won the right to try to turn over the Ace of Spades in our 50/50 game. He turned over an ace but of the wrong suit.

President **Helen** proceeded to our topic for World Polio Day.

"Polio is an infection caused by a virus that affects the entire body. There are three types of polio: non-paralytic, spinal paralytic and bulbar polio, which wreaks havoc with muscles, reflexes and respiratory problems. Up to 95% of polio cases show no symptoms. A small number of people may have fever, a sore throat, a headache, nausea, vomiting. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis, usually of the legs. Among those paralyzed 5 to 10% of patients die when their breathing muscles become immobilized.

"The virus is found in saliva and feces of sick people. It can be spread by direct contact with sick people, or through the air when a sick person talks, coughs or sneezes. It is also spread by food, water or contamination from hands. It can affect a person of any age but children five and under are especially vulnerable and make up roughly 50% of polio victims.

"Polio cases have decreased more than 99% since 1988, from an estimated 350,000 new cases every year to just 416 cases in 2013, 37 cases last year and 13 cases this year (to date).

"The World Health Assembly launched a global polio eradication initiative with the support of key health organizations in 1988, to focus on creating a solution to polio. Only three countries remain infected with the virus: Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan.

"Those are pretty interesting facts. I guess a lot of people in this room were Rotarians before Rotary took on this initiative."

Stan spoke up. "I was at the RI convention in Germany (in 1987) when Rotary announced that it would undertake to help eradicate polio. The first cheque was a million dollars; they said polio eradication was a hundred million dollar project at that time. How much is it up to now?"

"Exactly," **Helen** continued, "I have some words here from RI Past President Clifford Dochterman about the origins of PolioPlus. Please be patient while I read them.

"Rotary's Polio Plus program has been described as the finest humanitarian project by a non-governmental organization the world has ever known. Rotary has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for our efforts. It is Rotary's project of the highest interest for over 20 years.

"Many Rotarians have no idea of how Rotary ever became involved in eradicating polio in the world. So, let me recall the story.

"In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, virtually every person knew someone in their family or circle of friends who had polio. In the early 1950s, there were annually over 55,000 cases of polio in the United States. Worldwide there were perhaps 500,000 cases of polio. Of that number 50,000 children a year would die from polio and thousands more would be crippled, paralyzed or suffer lifelong disabilities.

"So that was the backdrop of our story. In 1978, Rotary had a committee, appointed by R.I. President Clem Renouf, to design a new direction for Rotary. It was called the Health, Hunger and Humanity Committee. This was a small committee to design a program for Rotary International to undertake projects far greater than any club or district could do. Rotary had never undertaken a corporate or worldwide project – just club programs. I happened to be co-chairman of that 3-H Committee. We knew that if we didn't have an immediate success, the Rotary world would probably scrap the program

the next year. So we looked for an "immediate success" project. We had about 16 projects proposed from around the world. One proposal was from the Philippines. Dr. Benny Santos wrote that if Rotary could provide the vaccine, they would mobilize all the Rotarians in the entire Philippines and immunize all the children. So, that was it. We approved the project; and if I recall correctly, some 6 million children were immunized against polio. It was a huge success. Pharmaceutical companies had other types of vaccine – for measles, tetanus, chicken pox and other vaccines which were donated for Rotarians to distribute in several areas of the world. That's how it came to be called PolioPlus. Rotary proved that immunization was the kind of project Rotary volunteers could handle.

"A couple years passed, and another Rotary committee was created in 1982 by R.I. President Stan McCaffrey called the New Horizons Committee. This group had the job of "looking into the future of Rotary to see what tasks or new directions Rotary could take on the future." We considered hundreds of ideas – some big ones and some rather frivolous. Finally, I suggested that we ought to be thinking 20 or 30 years into the future. Why not do something big for Rotary's 100th anniversary coming up in 2005? A letter from Rotarian John Sever suggested that we might provide polio vaccine for all the children in the world. The committee thought that was a good idea, so it was one of the 35 suggestions proposed to the R.I. Board of Directors. So, in 1982 the Board of Rotary International approved the idea of giving polio vaccine to all the children in the world. The project was called "Polio 2005."

"Two or three years went by, and finally in 1985, Dr. Carlos Canseco, RI Pres. from Monterrey, Mexico said that if we were going to get the task done by 2005, we should get started. So, he called Dr. Albert Sabin to Evanston and we had a meeting of some of the world's most distinguished medical and public health leaders. Dr. Sabin said it would cost at least \$100 million dollars and we would have to immunize 500 million children. Wow what a job!

"So, Rotary set a goal of \$120,00, and the name of the project was changed to "Polio Plus." It was the first major fund raising campaign by Rotarians of the world for a single project. However, by 1987 we had surpassed the goal and actually raised \$240 million. So, Rotary leaders went to the World Health Organization and said we want to eradicate polio. It was not well accepted by all the WHO leaders who represented some of the most knowledgeable health authorities in the world. Rotary was "just a service club." Finally, when Rotary told them that we had over a million volunteers and \$247 million in our pocket, they said, "Come on in." So we became full partners of the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the US Centers for Disease Control.

"At that time, in 1988, you could find polio in 125 nations of the world and it was estimated that there were 350,000 cases of polio in the world every year. But we took on the project – one country at a time. Our first big immunization day was in Mexico, where we immunized 13 million children. Then we went to Central America and South America. One nation after another became 'polio free.'

"Rotary Clubs became 'Polio Plus Partners' to raise funds for National Immunization Days. The Partners purchased ice boxes, colorful vests, caps, leaflets, street banners and many other items needed to mobilize whole nations to immunize their children.

"The project is an amazing and complicated one. Rotarians and health workers have to go to the most remote areas of the

world by canoe, camels, elephants, horseback, motorbikes, and every other conceivable vehicle to reach all the world's children.

"Even in China, Laos, Vietnam, Cuba, Myanmar and other areas where there is no Rotary, we worked freely to distribute the vaccine. An interesting experience occurred in China. There was reluctance by China officials to accept vaccine from the Western Nations. We said, use Chinese made vaccine. But there was no polio vaccine made in China. So, Rotary said, "We will build a pharmaceutical plant in China, and made a grant of \$18 million dollars to construct a factory in China. As soon as the project was under way, China said now we will take the vaccine from the West. Immediately, China said all the children of China will be immunized, and the first two days, 100 million Chinese youngsters received the polio vaccine.

"The amazing thing is that the pharmaceutical plant has never produced one dose of polio vaccine, and the Chinese officials went ahead and immunized their children when they saw that Rotary International was serious about this mission.

We were not able to meet the target of a polio-free world by 2005, but we are close. Over 99% of the children of the world have received polio vaccine. You can find polio only in 3 nations, not the 125 countries when we started. We hope that we can soon stop the incidents in Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Last year there were only 37 cases in the world – compared to the 350,000 cases a year when Rotary undertook this humanitarian mission.

"There are so many aspects to the polio story. I recall one day, when I was Chairman of The Rotary Foundation. We had a call from the World Health Organization, saying that they had arranged for a four day cease fire in the civil war in the Sudan so we could go in and immunize their children. But the WHO did not have any money to purchase the vaccine. I said, "How much does it take?" It was going to cost \$400,000. I said, "You can have it immediately from The Rotary Foundation." The Chairman can make a grant up to \$500,000 for an emergency humanitarian effort. The war stopped, health workers went in and immunized 3 or 4 million children – then the war started again. The World Health Organization said, "Of all the places in the world, there was no place we could turn – except Rotary – to make that project happen." Clearly, without the efforts of Rotary the achievements to eradicate polio would never have happened.

"Perhaps some of you have participated in a National Immunization Day. It is an amazing experience."

Helen interrupted her recital to point out that she has met several Rotarians in this district who have actually participated in a National Immunization Day. She then continued to recite Cliff Dochterman's story about Rotary's involvement in polio eradication.

"If only we'd had the vaccine 2, 5, 10 years before in Ethiopia these children would be walking, running and playing as children want to do. There are over 2 billion children who have received Rotary's polio vaccine – and they are now living a life without the fear of paralysis and death from polio.

"We are on the verge of eradicating this dreaded disease. Perhaps next year, or the year after. And the amazing thing is it has been made possible because Rotary Clubs, like yours, took a huge step some 20 years ago. Even today, funding is necessary. You may have heard that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has contributed another \$450 million dollars to our efforts in recent months because they believe that Rotary will achieve this dream.

"That's the story of Rotary's involvement in our greatest humanitarian program – Polio Plus. And I thank every one of you who have been a part of this program for so many years."

Helen continued, "A few members have made new contributions to our End Polio jar today, and others to Rotaide Foundation with instructions that the money be forwarded to The Rotary Foundation for PolioPlus.

"I have a couple of short videos."

Joe Maxwell said he was of the opinion that "we will never entirely wipe out polio, for the simple reason that, in parts of those three countries that still have polio, religion forbids people to have their children immunized against polio. So what do we do then?"

"The world is slowly changing, Joe," **Helen** said. "Some of the countries that are already polio-free also have substantial populations following that same religion, but mothers have decided their children are more important."

"It's my opinion," **Joe** continued, "it's time for Rotary to choose another major project, such as the eradication of malaria."

Sade suggested the reluctance is not due to religion, but to suspicion that the vaccinations are intended to sterilize the children to prevent them from ever bearing children of their own.

Other members pointed out that, even in North America, there is a widespread opposition to vaccinations in general.

Helen responded that we need to remember that this is Rotary we are talking about today and Rotary's determination to wipe polio from the face of the earth. "That's the topic of discussion on this World Polio Day, this wonderful thing that Rotary has done for the children of the world."

She also had a couple of short videos that she showed us.

"A lot of Rotary clubs are looking for ways to come up with a spike in funds that we can contribute to the final push to put the polio eradication campaign over the top. We have our END POLIO jar here at the head table that people put money in from time to time and, as I said earlier, we have received a few special donations today, But I wonder if we could have a special event that would help us raise funds for polio, It has been suggested by a member that we could have a Poor Man's Breakfast in January. Other suggestions included putting a portion of the profits from this year's Oyster Party toward polio, or that we have a bread-and-water lunch and put our \$20 per member into the polio pot.

Wayne said we could probably have the use of the Rescue Squad hall for a Poor Man's Breakfast if we choose a date that the hall is available.

Helen stressed that whatever fundraising method we pick, it must involve the community, not just Rotarians.

Brenda thanked Helen for her presentation and the videos. "I'm sure we all learned a lot because it was very informative and we can all be proud Rotarians for the amazing success that we have had reducing the incidence of polio from hundreds of thousands of new cases every year to just a handful. We appreciate the time you spent putting this programs together."

