



# The Lakeshorian

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MONTREAL-LAKESHORE

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## *This Week's Program...*

[**Evening meeting**] A joint meeting with the Rotary Club of Hudson and St-Lazare, it will be a **Sugaring Off Party**.

It will take place at Auberge des Gallant, 1171 Chemin Saint-Henri, Sainte-Marthe, QC J0P 1W0. Cost: \$25.00

Directions from Holiday Inn Pointe-Claire: Take Autoroute 40 westbound toward Ottawa. Get off at Exit 17 (approx. 35 km). Follow QC-201 S and Chemin Saint-Henri to the entrance to the Auberge. RCML members received a detailed map and photo.

## *Birthdays and Anniversaries this week...*

*... none that we know of.*

## *Future Programs...*

Mar 14: **Francis Scarpaleggia**, Member of Parliament for Lac-Saint-Louis, chaired the House of Commons Special Committee on **Electoral Reform**. The Liberal government vowed to "restore the integrity of our electoral process and improve the fairness of our elections." Francis will bring us up to date on that.

Mar 21: **Barbara Engels**, District Rotaract Co-Representative and member of the Rotaract Club of Downtown Montreal, will talk to us **about joint projects and partnerships**.

Mar 28: T.B.D.

## *Special Events...*

June 2: (Friday) **Our Annual Auction**. In less than five months we will host our most important event of this Rotary year. It will provide the lion's share of the funding for our club's projects in 2017-2018.

## *Last Week's Meeting...*

Only twelve members, including Honorary Member Joe Maxwell, were on hand to hear **PDG Bill** tell us about Rotary's founder, **Paul Harris**, as part of the joint birthday celebrations of Rotary International and our club.

Present, besides Joe and Bill, were **Maureen, Sacit, Rosie, Stan, Murray, JP, Knud, Emily Cameron** and **Deniz**. There were no guests or visiting Rotarians.

**President JP** offered Happy Birthday wishes on behalf of the club to **PDG Serge Robillard** (Feb 28) and **Andy Csisztu** (March 5).

The 50/50 pot was not won last week so it will continue to grow until someone finds the Ace of Spades.

**Emily** enlarged upon the sad news, reported in last week's issue of *The Lakeshorian*, regarding **Giacomo Gigliotti**, the youth exchange student from Italy who had been scheduled to

arrive in Montreal in August 2014. "Just a few days before his scheduled departure from Italy," Emily told us, "he was diagnosed with leukemia. He fought the disease bravely, enduring a bone marrow transplant from his mother. For a time he appeared to be improving, but the bone marrow was not a perfect match and he suffered a relapse. He sought a better match on the international bone marrow registry but his condition continued to deteriorate and we received the sad news that he had passed away on February 11<sup>th</sup>. His passing was peaceful, surrounded by friends and family."

Introducing our speaker, PDG Bill, **JP** observed that we were celebrating two birthdays. "**Rotary International** celebrated its 112<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and **our club** was 56 years young, exactly half Rotary's age, on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Bill will tell us a bit about the beginnings of both RI and RCML," he added.

With the aid of two short PowerPoint shows, one about "Paul Harris, Soldier of Fortune," and the other about the beginnings of our club, Bill spun a fascinating tale.

"I'd like to start my story way back in time...to April 19, 1868," **Bill** began. "Canada was not yet 10 months old but on that date Paul P. Harris was born to George and Cornelia Harris in Racine, Wisconsin. In his book, *My Road to Rotary*, Paul Harris said of his parents, 'Of all charges which might be made against George and Cornelia, parsimony would not have stood the least chance. They were both royal spenders. Their plan was to spend the money and earn it—if possible—thereafter. It lasted far longer than it otherwise would have done through the simple expedience of a long series of checks signed by George's thrifty and indulgent father, Howard Harris of Wallingford, Vermont.

" 'But all good things must come to an end and so did the residence of the Harris family in Racine, Wisconsin.

" 'One July evening in 1871, Paul's father took his two boys—Cecil, age 5 and Paul, age 3—to Milwaukee where they embarked on the steamship *Oneida* bound for Buffalo, where they subsequently made their way to Wallingford, Vermont by a series of train rides. Paul's mother remained in Racine to care for the baby, Nina May.' "

On the right is the first picture we have of Paul Harris, age 3½ years:

"And so it came to pass that Paul Harris grew up in the home of his grandparents, Howard and Pamela Harris, in the village of Wallingford, Vermont.

"We have learned that, growing up, Paul Harris was a firebrand. By the time he started primary school he had curly hair. That first day the older boys formed a circle around the unfortunate Paul and shouted, 'Oh,



see the little girl boy!' That evening grandmother tearfully clipped of the offending curls.

"When he was ready to start high school, Paul was enrolled in the famous Black River Academy in the village of Ludlow, not far from Wallingford, but was soon expelled as a troublemaker. He was then sent to a high school in Rutland, where he was known as a prankster but at least was not expelled.

"After secondary school, he attended the University of Vermont in Burlington but in 1886 he was expelled in an incident involving a secret society. In the fall of 1887, he attended Princeton University.

"However, due to the death of his grandfather in the spring of 1888, Paul did not return to school the following fall. Instead he moved to Des Moines, Iowa, where he was apprenticed at a local law firm. After completing his apprenticeship, he studied law at the University of Iowa, graduating with a Bachelor of Laws in June 1891.

"One of the lecturers to graduating class, a practicing lawyer who had graduated ten years earlier, suggested that it might be a wise plan for each graduate to go first to some small town and make a fool of himself for five years, after which he could go to the city of his choice and really begin his practice.

"This advice resolved all doubts in Paul's mind; he would set aside five years to make a fool of himself, not in any small community but in all parts of the world to which he could manage to make his way.

"What an adventure! After having had his fling, he would hang up his shingle in some great city, Chicago perhaps, and settle down and be a regular lawyer.

"So he embarked on this fool's errand and never once turned back. His sustaining hope was that his absorbing interest in folks at home and abroad would carry him through.

"For the next five years, he traveled the United States and Europe as a soldier of fortune, making new friends and just loving life and paying his way by working odd jobs:

"The first was as an advertising salesman, and later a reporter, for the San Francisco Chronicle. There he met Harry Pulliam (who later became president of the National Baseball League). They decided they wanted to explore California so they both quit their jobs at the Chronicle and worked as manual laborers on a fruit Ranch near Napa Valley about 60 miles away. After they had saved a few dollars they gave up their jobs and set off on a three-hundred-mile trek through the mountains of California and the Yosemite Valley. They were both amateurs at this so they soon lost their way. That part of California was sparsely populated in those days but soon after their supplies ran out they came to human habitation in the Yosemite Valley. They gave up on the 300-mile trekking idea and took jobs briefly in a raisin-packing plant in Fresno. From there they went to Los Angeles where, after failing to find work as a newspaper reporter, Paul became a teacher at the Los Angeles Business College.

"After completing a nine-month stay in California, Paul headed back east. He stopped in Denver, Colorado, where he took an acting job in a stock company in a local theater. But he



Paul, age 15



didn't remain on the stage any longer that at any other job he took simply to sustain himself until he could move on.

"With a penchant for mountaineering developed in the Green Mountains of Vermont he climbed Pike's Peak in two days, overnighing in the halfway house, then ran all the way down to catch the eleven o'clock train back to Denver. He soon found a job as a reporter for the Rocky Mountain News, where he remained until he again grew restless and decided to find out what it was like to live the life of a cowboy on a ranch near Platteville, Colorado.

"Paul stuck with that job for some months, frequently riding the range alone for days at a time, searching for stray cattle. He grew tired of life on the range and returned to Denver where he got a job on The Republican newspaper.

"Another land of romance that appealed to young Paul Harris was Florida, so his next jump was to Jacksonville, where he took a job as a night clerk at the St. James Hotel. He found he didn't like that job so he left to take a position as a traveling salesman for the George W. Clark Marble and Granite Company. That job allowed him to travel all over Florida but in 1893 he resigned his position and took off for Washington to witness the inauguration of Grover Cleveland as President of the United States, then on to Louisville, Kentucky where he got a job as a traveling salesman for another marble and granite company. That position gave him the opportunity to explore Kentucky, Tennessee, northern Georgia and Virginia.

"After a time he resigned that job and took a boat from Norfolk, Virginia to Philadelphia, where he longed to find a way to finance a trip to the British Isles. He soon found a want ad in a Philadelphia newspaper for a Baltimore company looking for cattlemen to work on a boat carrying a shipment of cattle to England. Before dawn the next day he was ploughing the seas, looking forward to the ship's arrival in England. It was not an easy voyage. The seas were rough and he learned to his dismay that the boat he was on had the reputation of being the worst boat of the worst line in trans-Atlantic service at that time. After fourteen days of suffering from seasickness Paul landed in Liverpool. He walked around the city and its suburbs but his stay in England was all too brief as he boarded another vermin-infested ship from the same cattle company and endured another rough Atlantic crossing. Arriving in Baltimore he resolved never again to sail with that shipping line.

"In need of money he walked 15 miles to Ellicott City, Maryland, where he found work in a hay field. I was hard work but he continued to scan the newspapers for reports of sailings to Europe. To his delight he got a job as sub-foreman in charge of a gang on a more seaworthy ship destined for London. He and a friend from the boat walked the streets from morning to night, visiting all the sights he had longed to see-- the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, the Tower of London, Saint Paul's, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar, the Strand and many other delightful places of interest. The ship he had travelled to England on was scheduled to depart from Swansea in South Wales, heading for Philadelphia with a cargo of coal. As it happened the colliers were on strike, delaying the ship's departure and giving Paul the chance to visit points of interest in Swansea.

"The return voyage was pleasant and, back in the USA, Paul used his meager earnings to purchase train fare to Chicago where the World's Fair of 1893 was taking place.

"But Paul Harris did not stay in Chicago this time. Another American city was especially alluring, New Orleans. How to get

there was the question. He borrowed \$15 from an old college friend and found a round-trip ticket for sale at \$10 because it was within 24 hours of expiration. He found he could purchase good room and board in New Orleans for \$4 a week and he immediately headed for the newspaper offices. Unfortunately, business was slow so nothing was available. But on the desk of an advertising salesman he saw the copy of a want-ad for 'a dozen men to pick oranges in Plaquemine parish.'

"He got a job with a gang of men picking, packing and boxing oranges. One Sunday morning, Paul and some other members of the picking crew rowed across the Mississippi to dredge for oysters. Returning that afternoon they ran into a fierce storm which was later described as "the great coast storm of 1893 which swept one island clear of every human being and spawned a tidal wave that devastated an area of hundreds of square miles."

"Paul decided to go back to Jacksonville Florida and see if he could get his old job back as a traveling salesman for the George W. Clark Marble and Granite Company. Clark was happy to take him back and even to give him new territory to cover, including the southern states, Cuba and the Bahamas.

"He and the owner became good friends. After twelve months of plying his salesmanship in the states, Paul inquired about a chance to help the company by visiting the granite-producing regions of Scotland and the marble-producing regions of Ireland, Belgium and Italy, with a view to buying the products of foreign quarries. George Clark readily agreed.

"Paul subsequently visited the three countries mentioned, plus France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Holland. Not only that, but while in Scotland he met Jean Thomson, a lovely young lady who would one day become Mrs. Paul Harris.

"On his return to America in February, 1896, Paul was offered a partnership in the George W. Clark Marble and Granite Company but he declined, saying, "The five years I set aside to become a soldier of fortune is coming to an end, George. It's time to take up my life's work as I promised my grandfather."

"So it was on February 27, 1896, almost exactly nine years before the birth of Rotary, that Paul Percy Harris stepped from a train to the station platform in Chicago. This was it. his five-year recess was at an end. He was now 28 and ready to go to work as an attorney-at-law.



"In the early 1900's he took a walk with a friend, Bob Franks, also an attorney. Everyone in the neighborhood waved to Bob. In his recollection of the occasion Paul Harris tell us, 'I couldn't help but feel it would be pleasant if men of this caliber could get together often. Say one man from each business or professional, meeting socially.'

"After establishing his law practice in Chicago, Paul Harris continued the Bohemian lifestyle he had learned to love during his college days back east. As his income increased, so did his ways of spending money. His knowledge of the Bohemian life of the city was second to none. He knew every Italian, Greek, German and Hungarian restaurant and delighted in guiding his out-of-town friends about the city. He loved having breakfast in a little place on Fifth Avenue, down a half-flight of stairs that a friend of Paul's had dubbed Hell's Half Kitchen. It served a stack of wheat cakes with syrup for the modest sum of a nickel.

"Paul and good friend Silvester Schiele would discuss this concept over dinner for the next five years. Then, one night after dinner, Silvester and Paul walked over to Gus Loehr's 7th Floor office in the Unity Building. When they arrived at Room 711, Hiram Shorey was visiting with Gus. It was after dark 23 February 1905. Paul Harris' life and the world would change forever.



"When Paul Harris was elected as third president of the Chicago Rotary Club in 1907, the club initiated its first public service project, the construction of public toilets in Chicago. This step transformed Rotary into the world's first Service Club. This action was facilitated by the formation of the Executive Committee, open to all members and their noon meetings began the tradition of club luncheon meetings.

"On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1910 Paul married Jean Thomson, the young lady he had met on his very first visit to Scotland in 1895. They never had any children but Jean traveled the world with Paul in the support of Rotary."



"Paul Harris would see Rotarians literally form the United Nations. Could he have dreamed up wiping out a world-wide childhood disease? He did say, 'This is a changing world; we must be prepared to change with it. The story of Rotary will have to be written again and again!'

"The first Rotary club outside the USA was the Rotary Club of Winnipeg, organized on November 3, 1910 and chartered on April 13, 1912. Other Canadian clubs followed: Toronto (March 2013), Montreal (October 2013) and, among others, Montreal-Lakeshore (February 27, 1961).

"As we are also celebrating our club's 56<sup>th</sup> birthday, let's take a quick peek at some of our own history.

"In 1960 Mackay Smith, president of the Montreal Rotary Club, requested a meeting with "Sainty" Holland, governor of Rotary District 704.

"The desire for a Rotary club in Montreal's western suburbs had been simmering for several years. The central core of the island was well served by the five existing clubs: Montreal, Westmount, Montreal-Westward, Verdun-Lasalle & St. Laurent-Mount Royal, but the good people of the western suburbs were woefully without a Rotary club of their own.

"The prospective charter members of the new club met on February 27, 1961 with Montreal Club president Mackay Smith and District Governor 'Sainty' Holland and charted a course to a club of their own, under President



Keith Dancy, Mackay Smith & DG Holland

"And the rest, as they say, is history."