



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE



Rotary

The Lakeshorian

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This Week's Program...

Past President Maureen will speak on the topic, "Why?"

We have no idea what that topic entails, but it does suggest a bit of intrigue, does it not?

Maureen's 5-year-old grandson, Myles, is in town with his parents, Tina (Lawrence and Maureen's daughter) and Yannick. As any grandparent knows, many a child's questions begin with the word "Why," as in "Grandma, why is the sky blue?"

Perhaps that has led Maureen to compile a list of interesting queries she has enjoyed responding to, to satisfy Myles's curiosity. Perhaps it's something else entirely.

Why not join us and we'll all find out together.

Birthdays and Anniversaries this week...

Happy Birthday, Pat Khal Sunday, August 13th!

Future Programs...

Aug 15: **Ryan Rowe**, Global Peace Ambassador, will talk about the **Global Peace Index**, which monitors the progress of peace in countries around the world.

Aug 22: T.B.D.

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.

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 will be sent out to members this week.

Oct. 20: (Friday) All Rotarians are invited to enjoy a special luncheon in Hartford, Connecticut, featuring **RI President Ian Risely** 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...

Unfortunately, only twelve members were present last week, as we learned first-hand how someone barely into his teens has become one of the youngest champion divers in Canada.

Our speaker was **Nathan Zsombor-Murray**, accompanied by his father, Stewart.

We were also pleased to welcome **Wayne**, President **Helen**, **Lawrence**, **Bill**, **Murray**, **Semi**, **Glorefe**, **Anne**, **Knud**, **Brenda**, **Cameron**, **Joe Zemanovich**, and Honorary Member **Joe Maxwell**.

Wayne announced that **Cheshire Foundation's Stewart Brown Residence, 20 Place David, D.D.O.** will hold its annual picnic/barbecue on **Thursday, August 10th**, from **noon to 3 pm**. "It's an open invitation to anyone who wishes to come," **Wayne** said, "just let me know so we can be prepared for the number of people to expect."

Club Secretary **Cameron** told us the district is in a crisis situation. They are looking for translators, mainly from English into French, for district documentation. If you have such skills, please contact **Cameron** and he will put you in touch with the appropriate district personnel.

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

Brenda reviewed the upcoming volunteer opportunities:

- **West Island Mission**, Friday, August 11th, to fill school back packs, from 6 to 9:30 pm.
- **Welcome Hall Mission**, Wednesday, August 16th, to fill school back packs, from noon to 5 pm. She reminded us that this will be a 'big deal' event, with media coverage.

President Helen, who knows a little bit about competitive diving, having been a judge on more than one occasion, introduced our speaker. She said, "I first saw **Nathan** dive at Viking Pool in Pointe-Claire, then later at the Pointe-Claire Pool, where he was learning some pretty fancy dives, including off the 10-meter platform. He just represented Canada at the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, where he was the youngest diving competitor. The last time we have had such a young diver representing Canada in international competition was **Alexandre Despatie**, and that was almost 20 years ago. We all know what a great career he carved out. I'm convinced, **Nathan**, that you're headed in that direction, too. So let's all hear **Nathan** as he talks about his diving career."

[Editor's note: An awesome young man, 14 years of age, spoke to us last Tuesday. I wish we could put every word in this newsletter but there were way too many for this two-pager. As the saying goes. "You just had to be there." If you missed this one you missed a good one indeed!]

With **Dad** accessing the Internet, **Nathan** told us, "This is a video of me and my synchro partner (in Budapest last month)."

[<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/999604803966>]

"We got 8, 8, 8, 6½ and 5," he added.

Asked to tell us what the experience was like for him, he said, "The best way I can describe it is, it's like walking into a movie, walking onto the set. You see all these actors and you get to make the movie with them. But this wasn't a set, I was in a pool, and they weren't actors, they were divers. Going up the stairs I was super-nervous. Most of the pressure came from me. It wasn't my coaches—they didn't really expect much of me. I was 14, at my first world championships. So, all the

pressure I felt came from inside. I was putting myself down, thinking, 'Crap. What if I fail? What if I don't go at the same time as my synchro partner?' I was freaking out.

"But before I talk about what happened on the end of the platform, I want to go back about ten years, to where it all started. I grew up in Pointe-Claire; I still live in Pointe-Claire. It started at my summer pool, Viking. I would go there with my dad and my sister. We would just have fun. I'd get up on my dad's shoulders and he'd throw me off. I'd do flips and twists and other crazy stuff. It just so happened that the assistant head coach from Pointe-Claire, Dave Bedard, was there recruiting divers. He asked my sister and me to come and try out for diving, and my career just took off from there.

"It started with a few diving lessons, from coaches Devon Butters, Luc Fillion, now with Dive Canada, Assistant Head Coach Dave Bedard and finally Head Coach Yihua Li, who is not only an Olympian but also a multiple world champion. Training at Pointe-Claire pool opened so many doors for me, including going to the Olympic Stadium and training there with other coaches and divers. It's where I met Meaghan Benfeito, Jennifer Abel, Pamela Ware, Philippe Gagné and numerous other Olympians. And I wasn't only training with Yihua; I had another coach, Arturo Miranda, the Cuban you saw in the video.

"So, because this year was a very big year for me—I was finally old enough to train on 10-metre—I learned six dives in five months. That might not sound like very much but for me it was super difficult. Diving from tower is not what I really wanted to do; I wanted to do 10-metre springboard. But because of my body type—I'm not a very big guy—they had me specialize on tower. My first dive, going 10-metre, was super nerve-wracking, but I did it and..."



Nathan paused and was asked, "Was it more nerve-wracking than you feel now?"

"Surprisingly, it's not as bad as standing in front of my class."

Nathan's dad suggested he talk a bit about specialization. "The 3-metre event was your favourite, but now you can't use that one. It's the reality of the sport. You have to specialize."

"Specialization is more of a conscious decision," Nathan told us. "They look at you and they say, 'You're a bit smaller so, that's one for tower. You jump not as high—that's another point for tower. So, all things considered, I'm going to be specializing on tower, mainly because of my body type."

"Diving at this level takes a lot of sacrifice, not only for me but also for my parents—to drive me to the pool, pay for my diving, pay for my school. But it also takes a lot of sacrifice for me. While I'm at home eating a salad, my friends are at A&W having a burger. They're having a pizza; I'm having a smoothie.

"Getting vacation is a lot of fun but maintaining the physical fitness I have to maintain is very difficult. I've been on vacation for almost two weeks now and I've gained 4 pounds, which is quite a lot."

"You'll be back in the gym, soon," Lawrence said.

"However," his father added, "a family friend who is also a high-performance athlete reminds us that it's very important for athletes to take a break. There's something called overtraining, I don't fully understand the phenomenon but if you train too intensely and you don't take breaks, it can do a lot of damage, both mentally and physically."

"Now," Nathan continued, "I train about 4½ hours every day. Monday, Wednesday and Friday I work at the Olympic

Stadium; Tuesdays and Thursdays I work at Pointe-Claire. At the Olympic Stadium I have two practices, usually 1½ to 2½ hours each. Every practice they give me different dives to do and it really depends how long it takes me to do those dives.

"Budapest was my third international competition, which was shocking because I never expected my third to be the World Championships. My first was two years ago, in Cuba for the Junior Pan-Ams for North, South and Central America. The second was the International Youth Diving Meet in Dresden, Germany. It was a much bigger competition. Over 20 countries competed, including Russia, Mexico, the Ukraine and several other European countries. I didn't do so well there. I came in 7th, with 401 points. That's 84 points off my personal best. I felt very disappointed. My second event was on 1-metre and I just gave up. That was even more of a disappointment because I completely failed my event.

"And, of course, the next one was in Budapest, the World Championships, where I came in 5th in mixed synchro. The weekend after were the (Junior Elite) Nationals. I had to leave Budapest early to make it. Got here at 3 in the morning and later that same day I had to practice. I was exhausted. For the competition I was freaking out—I was super tired and I wasn't in the right head space. I had been diving horribly in practice. But all my personal bests have come after horrible practices. I placed 1st, 5th and 3rd. The next competitions for me are the Pan-Ams in Victoria BC, at the end of September."

"But are you having fun, Nathan?" **Cameron** asked.

"It's your passion, right?" **Helen** suggested.

"It's my passion, but not because I enjoy the sport. When I was younger I wanted to be a soccer player. I was pretty good at soccer. I tried out a few sports and diving really took off. It's more because of the people I meet. And I get to travel all over the world. I like diving but it's also freaking scary! I have an immense fear of heights; I'm terrified up there on the tower."

Nathan's father had kudos for "Pointe-Claire's summer pool network that got us started into diving. And then there's this amazing aquatic centre that Pointe-Claire and the Quebec government spent \$17 million to build five years ago, with an Olympic size pool with state-of-the-art platforms and dive boards. We have also been really naïve; we didn't know what we had in this son of ours.

"Canada's 6 Olympian divers are all from Quebec. Plongeon Québec has been incredibly supportive. Elsewhere in Canada parents pay 2 or 3 times what we've had to pay. So hats off to Quebec. They don't always do everything right in Quebec but in diving, I am a Quebecker!"

Murray thanked our amazing young speaker. "Nathan, I am tremendously impressed with your composure and your ability to stand up there in front of a group of people, most of whom



you've never seen before. You rose to the occasion and spoke from your heart about something you obviously do well. You may not be a big guy but you have a big heart and an even greater talent that comes through with your speaking as well as your diving. By the way, the food at A&W, McDonald's and Wendy's is not as good as your friends tell you. You also have great support

from your parents. As far as we're concerned here tonight, you ripped it for us. Thank you for that."