

Today's Program

Avrum Rosensweig

Topic

Canada's Light into the Nations

Location

Imperial Room, Fairmont Royal York



Avrum Rosensweig, Founding Director and President of Ve'ahavta, is motivated by the ethics of Judaism and the importance of hands-on volunteerism, and believes that by working with interfaith partners, both Jews and non-Jews rediscover the beauties of Judaism, its universal ethical message, and how Jewish inspired acts of charity make the world a better place.

For thirteen years, Avrum has directed Ve'ahavta, Canada's only Jewish humanitarian and relief organization. Avrum and his team have designed and supervised projects in Israel, and have created and continue to oversee projects in Canada with Native peoples, in South America with Jewish, Amerindian, and Afro Caribbean peoples, in Asia with communities affected by the Tsunami, and with the peoples of rural Africa.

Avrum was a talk show host and performed on television for ten years as one of the Food Guys. He writes a weekly newspaper column for the Canadian Jewish News and is also Ve'ahavta's most popular public speaker. In this capacity, he was one of the first Canadian notables to publicly cry out for the victims of the genocide in Darfur, urging the citizens and government of this fair democracy to act to solve this ongoing tragedy. As an amateur painter, Avrum insists that any resemblance that he may have to a character in Chaim Potok's novel, "My Name is Asher Lev," is purely coincidental."

PRESIDENT TANAKA: ONE YEAR LATER

By Robert O'Brien, Chair of Tanaka Centennial Visit Committee

As we close out one of the coldest months of March in Canadian history, it is worth remembering one year ago in Rotary history when RI President Sakuji Tanaka visited Toronto in the month of March to celebrate our Club's 100th Anniversary and for three days warmed up our City.



The Club pulled out all the stops for this Presidential visit to make it a proud and memorable moment in the life of our Club. President Tanaka met with the Club's Board of Directors on the 19th floor of the Royal York Hotel and followed with a Gala Luncheon in the Concert Hall attended by 450 including Lieutenant Governor-David Onley who formally welcomed President Tanaka to Canada and congratulated our Club on 100 years of service.

The spectacular Kiyoshi Nagata Drummers entertained us during lunch and President Tanaka delivered an inspirational keynote address about the End Polio Now campaign. President Neil Phillips presented President Tanaka with a cheque from our Club for \$100,000.00 which, as a result of matching grants, translated into \$300,000.00 towards polio eradication. The lunch followed with a special afternoon tour of Rotary projects conducted by John Lloyd and Nick Larter and which included One Rotary Drive, the Philip Aziz Centre, the Health Buses and The Rotary Club of Toronto Transition Centre at St. Michael's Hospital. The day was capped with a packed reception on the 18th floor of the Royal York honouring Youth and New Generations organized by Lorraine Lloyd with young Japanese dancers as entertainment and President Tanaka was enthusiastically embraced by the youth as "a rock star." The exciting day ended with an intimate dinner arranged by Bill Morari at the National Club featuring the best of Canadian cuisine and before returning to Chicago the following day President Tanaka spoke at the District Peace Symposium about Peace Through Service.

It is worth remembering this moment in history, not only because it brought an early spring to our City, but also for those who participated in the President Tanaka's official state visit, it was an occasion where we not only hosted a world leader but we projected the best of our Club to the world and celebrated our Club's proud heritage.

One year later, Sakuji Tanaka whose term in office ended last June looks back at his Toronto visit with fond memories as one of the major highlights of his year as Rotary International President. Rosemary O'Brien who was so helpful in Evanston coordinating details of the visit with the Club's organizing committee advises that immediate Past President Tanaka-san has been able to return to and rediscover his home country. He is reportedly in the process of adding a room to his home—"Rotary Man Cave"- to store his memorabilia from his year as President and is busy driving all over Japan visiting relatives and many clubs and districts which he had put on hold during the two years he resided in Evanston. He returns to active duty this year as an incoming Trustee of the Rotary International Foundation. Like Neil Phillips, President Tanaka continues to dedicate himself to new Rotary activities after his presidential year.

As for End Polio Now campaign, more than 2.5 billion children have been immunized against polio and only three endemic countries remain including Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan. On January 13, 2014 Rotary marked three years since its last case of polio, a landmark achievement when one considers that as recently as 2009 India was home to nearly half the world's polio cases.

And so as we leave March behind, let the heart-warming memories of the month when President Tanaka came to town one year ago continue to energize and inspire our Club towards a busy and vibrant spring and summer.



Ribfest Volunteers Needed: Sign Up Now!

Ribfest is June 28 - July 1

Did you know, for EVERY HOUR someone volunteers to work the entrance program, you generate more than \$200 net funds to local charities supported by Rotary.

Last year our efforts brought in \$130,000.

Mark your calendar, start to think about able-bodied friends and colleagues who'd be willing to donate a shift or two or four...and let's beat last year's record.

Email Shannon Lundquist (shannon.lundquist@accenture.com) once you have an idea of which day you might be able to assist!



Upcoming Speakers & Events

April 2014

- 11 Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto
- 18 Easter, no meeting

May 2014

- 2 Major General Richard Rohmer
- 9 Bob Howard, CEO St. Michael's Hospital
- 16 No Meeting
- 23 Camp Scugog Fellowship Lunch

Events

Jun 28-Jul 1 Rib-Fest

Propose a Speaker
Peter Simmie, Chair

Program Committee
peter.simmie@bristolgate.com

Editor of the Week
Jeff Dobson

Editor April 4, 2014
Maureen Bird

What you missed March 28, 2014
John Andras

What You Missed March 21, 2014

— by Peter Love



March 21 marked the first full day of spring and, notwithstanding winter's reluctance to leave us this year, the Club members resolved to celebrate the occasion by assembling in the storied elegance of the Imperial Room for sustaining food and fellowship, and doses of wisdom and wit from the podium, with President Richard at the helm.

Our Esteemed Monitor for the day was Past President John Andras (he of the infamous "ARGOS" yodel) who carried out the job with his usual aplomb, introducing four Rotarians (including one from Palo Alto, California), a Rotaractor and 11 other guests.

President Richard had the very pleasant task of introducing two new members to the Club, Shelley McIntyre and Kerry Bowser, who both come to the Club with outstanding records of community service.

Our guest speaker was Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair. Mr. Blair has been a frequent visitor to the Club and is very well known to the members, and Marg Stanowski's able and welcoming introduction was accordingly kept brief, to give Bill as much time as possible to give us his remarks. The Chief began by commending us on the two new members introduced before him, who exemplified the kind of people that made him proud to be an honorary member of the Club.

The Chief described the features of Toronto that make it the safest and most liveable large city in North American, and one of the best in the world based on these criteria. The city's remarkable diversity and the social cohesion that comes from making newcomers feel welcome, makes the city the envy of the world. The police service has a very important role in fostering this cohesion, which the Chief views as one of his greatest challenges. This involves making every group in the City aware that the police are there for them. Under the Chief's watch, the police force has been transformed, to ensure that the cultural and gender makeup of the force reflects the diversity of the city, and steps have been taken to have police officers personally involved in the community life of the neighbourhoods they serve.

Following his remarks, the Chief answered questions from the audience on issues such as elder abuse and on-line bullying. He was a compelling and inspiring speaker, and left this writer with a profound sense of gratitude that our fine police force has such a leader.

Knud Westergaard purchased the winner in the 50/50 draw, but had to content himself with a bottle of wine, leaving \$2944 in the kitty for next time. Another fine meeting to make us glad we are Rotarians.



The Rotary Club of Toronto

The Fairmont Royal York
100 Front Street West, Level H, Toronto, ON M5J 1E3
Tel: 416-363-0604 Fax: 416-363-0686
office@rotarytoronto.on.ca www.rotarytoronto.com

The Rotary Club of Toronto Toronto Rotary @TorontoRotary

