



# HOWZAT!



## ROTARY CLUB OF NEWLANDS

“The club that appeals”



**President: Colin Burke**  
**Secretary: Lucian Pitt**



Be a gift to the world

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18 April 2016

## WEEKLY UPDATE

P O Box 44735  
CLAREMONT  
7735

**MEETINGS:** Western Province Cricket Club Sports Centre, Ave De Mist, Rondebosch, every Monday at 18h00 for 18h15 (Except for first Monday of the Month which is a Partner’s Meeting, 18h30 for 19h00).

**ATTENDANCE:** Notice of apologies and guests and/or meal specifics to email Vanessa Rousseau at [rousseau@iafrica.com](mailto:rousseau@iafrica.com) and copy to Melinda Stapleton at [mjstapleton@webafrica.org.za](mailto:mjstapleton@webafrica.org.za) before 10h30 on Monday mornings please.

### Comment

*via Shân Biesman-Simons*

#### Rotary at its best

### HIDING OUT

*From the April 2016 issue of The Rotarian*

He should have been thrilled. Carl Sanders had joined Rotary to be of service, and now, even though he was a relatively new member of the Rotary Club of Kenosha, Wis., he had an opportunity. A well-respected member called to ask Sanders to take over as sergeant-at-arms. He explained that the position involved preparing meetings, introducing guest speakers, and reading announcements. “So you’ll do it?” he asked. “I, uh, um ...” Sanders panicked. “Let me think about it,” he said, hanging up quickly.

Sanders had built a prosperous painting business. He was a respected church member. He had four children, a house, and, of late, a new group of friends in Rotary. He had a rich life, but for 50 years, he had kept a secret. Now 59, he shuddered to think of telling anyone. Would they laugh at him? Kick him out of Rotary? He spotted his Bible. He longed to find comfort in its words. The irony would have been comical if it weren’t so painful. Yes, it would help greatly – if only he could read it.

In the tranquil shade of his tree-canopied backyard, drops of condensation slide down a glass of iced sweet tea as Sanders searches for the words to describe the pain of that day, of a life spent hiding and pretending, and of the rich new world he lives in today, thanks to his Rotary club. "How I lived so long not knowing how to read is beyond me," he says, his voice laced with a courtly Southern drawl born of his native West Virginia and years spent in North Carolina. "I had no idea I was missing out on so much."

There was a time on a day like this, sun-splashed and fair, when he would have simply sat here drinking beer and telling himself he was content. Now, he does what was once unthinkable for him: pulls out a book, settles back, and becomes immersed in an adventure story. Sometimes he relives his own story, the one about a successful man who fooled everyone until a simple phone call made him realize he was really only fooling himself. In those moments, he finds himself back in a grammar school classroom, book in hand as the other students stare, praying that today the words would make sense, then wishing a hole would swallow him up when they refuse yet again.

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From the time Sanders started grammar school, the letters and the words seemed to mock him. Maybe he was dyslexic. It's hard to say now. "Sometimes I would see words differently, especially when reading," he recalls. "It just wasn't happening for me and I couldn't figure out why."

The more he struggled, the more his parents scolded him and the more hopeless he became. Living with his father in North Carolina after his parents divorced, Sanders failed the second and third grades, which brought sneering dismissals from his father and reinforced the folly of trying. "Every day, I was reminded that I wasn't going to amount to anything," he recalls. "It was never, 'Here, let me sit down and help you.'" As a result, he says, "I mentally quit when I was in the third grade."

He coped as well as he could. To protect himself from ridicule, he put on a bad-boy act. "I would tell a teacher to 'kiss my ass' just so she would send me to the principal's office and I wouldn't have to read," he says. In seventh grade, he clung to one last lifeline. He joined the football team, and the pride he felt motivated him in class. "I was really trying," he recalls. "My grades got better, and I was getting help from other guys on the team. It was my time, and I knew it. I had a sense of pride. I had a purpose."

It all vanished when the coach pulled him aside one day. "He said he was going to have to kick me off the team because I was too old by a couple of months.

"It crushed me. I thought, 'If I was on the fence [about school], you just pushed me to the other side.' I didn't go to school but a handful of times after that."

Eventually, Sanders dropped out and descended into a dark period of rebellion, drugs, and alcohol abuse. "I was thrown in jail a few times," he says. Kicked out of his home, he would sometimes break into houses "just to take a shower." At one point, he was sleeping in the back of a pickup truck that belonged to a friend's father. "It had a camper shell," he recalls. "I'd climb in the back of that thing at 2 in the morning and end up at his work. I'd climb out and go wherever after that. I was homeless."

But Sanders wasn't helpless. He discovered that he could "do just about anything with my hands" – fix engines, build a deck. "At 18, I could frame a house by myself," he says. Without being literate, he could still understand a blueprint. "Building a house was nothing for me. It just came naturally."

Life, unfortunately, didn't. He married too young and was soon divorced. He married a second time – a woman he met in North Carolina who was working her way through college at the University of Wisconsin – but that didn't work out either. "She used to give it to me about being uneducated," he says. Ultimately, however, he began to find his way. He found faith at a Church of Christ. He and his third wife did missionary work together.

But he continued to hide his secret. He failed his driver's license test seven times before he memorized the correct boxes to check and passed on the eighth try. He built a successful painting business using a simple model: hire people who could do the things he couldn't – read, keep the books.

Aside from a close call here and there, hiding his illiteracy proved relatively simple. He might not be able to read words, but he could read people. If someone asked him to read something, he would scan the page with an earnest expression until they gave him a hint of what his reaction should be. "Funny, huh?" they might say, and he would chuckle. "Yeah," he would grin. In church, he would politely decline to read out loud. When his children asked for help with their homework, "I'd just say, 'Go see your mom; I'm too busy right now.'"

The dishonesty gnawed at him, but the prospect of coming clean far outweighed any guilt pangs. After all, he told himself, he wasn't really hurting anybody. By the time he reached his 50s, he figured he would take his secret to the grave. He was who he was and he felt he had become a pretty good person. He had left his rebelliousness behind long ago. Though his third marriage ended, he loved his children and was active in his church.

He was also generous. "I always felt like there's more to life than taking," he says. To put action behind those words, every year he picked out a house whose owner needed help with repairs but couldn't afford it. At no cost to the homeowner, he brought his crew by and did the work.

Sanders was looking for more service opportunities when a friend, Clarence Griffin, suggested he check out Rotary. He had heard of the organization but had only a vague sense of what it was about. When he learned it was a humanitarian group dedicated to helping others, he knew it "was right up my alley." Except for one aspect. "These were highly educated people," he says. "Doctors, lawyers, businessmen. Here I was, a dropout who couldn't read." He joined anyway and was embraced, so much so that in 2012, barely a year after his first meeting, he was asked if he would be sergeant-at-arms. The offer flattered – and terrified – him. With most of the duties, such as keeping order and making sure the meetings ran smoothly, he would be fine. But reading in front of the group was impossible.

"My first thought was, 'I'm caught,'" he recalls. He thought he had two options: refuse or confess. Trembling, he picked up the phone. Rolly Peckus was a local businessman, a friend, and club president at the time. What Sanders didn't know was that Peckus was also deeply involved with the Kenosha Literacy Council, a group that helps people of all ages learn to read. The club, in fact, provided financial support to the council.

Still, Peckus was concerned when he heard the tone of Sanders' voice. "What is it, Carl? Are you quitting Rotary?"

"No, no," Sanders began. "Rolly, I don't know how to tell you this, but I have a secret I've been hiding a long time.... I don't know how to read. They've asked me to be sergeant-at-arms, and I don't know what to do."

"Carl," he said. "I do."

"I told him about the literacy council," Peckus recalls. "I also told him his secret was safe with me."

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Sanders' first reading lesson took place in the basement of the Kenosha Public Library, where he met with his tutor, Susan Remson. She immediately put him at ease. "She sat me down, put a newspaper in front of me, and said, 'Let's hear you read.' I could read 'the' and 'that' and words like that," he says, "but when it would come to basic words like 'wagon,' I couldn't do it."

She didn't blink. "I told him, 'You know what, Carl? You're going to be all right. You just need some confidence,'" Remson recalls. They started meeting twice a week. She began with the alphabet and answered Sanders' every question, including, she says with a laugh, things like "why there's a 'b' at the end of 'lamb.'"

“He didn’t just want to know how to spell something,” she says. “He wanted to know the root of the word – why it was spelled a certain way.” Rarely, Remson adds, had she seen a more motivated student. “He was absolutely determined.” They began reading Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, but Sanders clearly wasn’t connecting with it. What he really wanted to read, he told Remson, was a book a friend had recommended: *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand, the tale of a delinquent whose heroic struggles during World War II had been made into a movie. At more than 400 pages, it was a bit ambitious, but they began to tackle it. “She was so patient with me,” he recalls.

In 2013, as the time approached for Sanders to take office as sergeant-at-arms, the literacy council gave a presentation to members of the Rotary Club of Kenosha. The presenters opened by saying they had brought a special guest, someone who had been unable to read his entire life but, through their organization, not only had beaten his illiteracy but was working to earn his GED certification. A murmur rose from the audience as people strained to see who it was. When the room had quieted, the representative said, “Carl, would you stand up?”

“There was sort of a gasp,” Peckus recalls, “followed by a whoop, and then everyone stood up and started to applaud. I was smiling ear to ear because I know how much courage that took.”

In the weeks and months that followed, Sanders was asked to speak to a number of groups. One of them was an audience of 3,000 at Gateway Technical College, where he later enrolled in classes after earning his GED diploma. Near the end of the presentation, he looked out into the audience. “Last night,” he said, “I finished reading this, the first full book I’ve ever read.” As the crowd applauded, he waved the book, his eyes filling. The book, a tale of courage and redemption that could not have been more apropos, was *Unbroken*.

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Today, Sanders shares his story with groups of all ages. But there’s one set of struggling readers to whom he feels particularly drawn: potential school dropouts. “I tell them, ‘Don’t do it!’” he says, his voice filling with passion. “You’re so close. You’re right here. Before you know it, you’ll be over this hump and you’ll have it. You’re so young. You have so many things you’ll be able to do with that education. Don’t give up.”

He explains why reaching the young means so much to him. “There’s so much that people who can’t read miss out on,” he says. “I can take trips now and never leave the couch! Nobody tells you that when you’re a child – that when you’re reading a story about some guy on a boat, or about a couple of guys stuck on a raft in the middle of the ocean, that you get to be right there with them.”

Meanwhile, Sanders continues to explore his own new world. “Learning to read helped my esteem in more ways than you can imagine,” he says. “It’s raised my confidence level in business, in relationships. I don’t feel ignorant or intimidated around people anymore.” His new confidence inspired him to take on the role of club president last year. Next year he’ll serve as assistant district governor.

On the day he received his GED diploma in 2014, a friend gave him a present that still makes him shake his head. He had heard about the Kindle e-reader but wondered why in the world anyone would want such a thing. Now, loaded with books and stories, he can’t wait to sit on his porch, a glass of sweet tea by his side, and float off to another world.

By Bryan Smith

The Rotarian

April 2016

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## Previous Meeting

**Minutes of the meeting on 11 April 2016**

**Scribe: Jenny Howard**

Bill opened meeting 10 mins late due to the missing President.

We all sang Happy Birthday to the DG.

Bill passed the Spoon onto Kenny for all the work he does in the background.

Menno introduced Rami, and explained how he got involved in a global grant scholarship which was approved this week. Rami was born in Colorado, and went to university there studying international relations and a masters in political science. Now doing PhD at UCT, in political science. He comes from District 5450, Denver Colorado

Rami gave a talk on his origins as he wants us to get to know him- he will be here for a good few years. He has Syrian/Swedish/Indian/English/Lebanese/Palestinian roots and a twin sister plus 2 other siblings. His grandmother is from Liverpool, so he supports that team. The biggest rugby stadium in the States is in his city.

He loves traveling, it's part of his soul. Photography, especially black and white, is another passion of his. He started out as a DJ in NY, then trained as an English teacher and went to teach in Shanghai, followed by a stint in the Peace Corps, when He was sent to Mozambique as a community health volunteer.

He got a school and a library started in his village in Mozambique, as well as a moringa nursery, as he got malaria 4 times and moringa tea helped. He also started raising chickens as a form of protein for the community to replace fish, as the coast has been fished out. Then he went to Maputo and organized people to get bursaries to the US, UK and SA.

He is studying democracy in Africa. Women's power is vital to democracy, especially in Africa. Case studies in Guinea Bissau, Tanzania and Mozambique. Human rights and rights of women are central to his belief system.

072 827 8749 [Rami.sayed85@gmail.com](mailto:Rami.sayed85@gmail.com)

PS His twin is a chef who runs some B&Bs in Denver!

Then he chose to join Rotary due to its commitment to community, and felt he would be accepted because he's full of good ideas. His area of focus is peace and conflict resolution and prevention.

### SPOTS

Graham F announced that the Induction Dinner will be at the Wild Fig, 24 June. Approx cost of R200 pp

Chris Beech asked for people to let him know if they are going to Conference

Jenny I announced a budget meeting for her committee, and thanked Janey Ball and Regine for their roles

Brian P announced a meeting of his committee and so did Andy, both after this meeting

John Winship mentioned the openings recently announced in HOWZAT, 26/4 at 11, Masi ECD, finally after 3 years. Would love as many of us to go and see the 4 classrooms, great playground. He will send more details

Looking at maintenance at Lords Acre

Steenberg High school – we have forward funding for a music room and classrooms next year, from Penbev, so his budget of R2.2 million

Colin in his Presidents Spot, drew the raffle for the Outdshoorn prize: Melinda, who really didn't want it, won it to huge amusement

But Menno got everyone on their feet to sing to Colin who is getting married on Saturday. Colin put wine on the tables.

Colin reported that the opening of Open Door was a fantastic joint project with RC Cape of Good Hope, of which we would love to do more. He asked to make every effort to attend

He announced the upcoming birthdays and anniversaries, and reminded the Board about their meeting on Wednesday coming up

Pippa was given a voucher for a shark cage dive in Mossel Bay. Colin auctioned it to Garnet for R1 000

Sergeant Bill complained that members are not reading their emails.

Happy Rands

Ian P was fined for not sticking to his promise to fix the gong on 14 March. He has so far managed to remember to take it home, giving Melinda sleepless nights.

Menno's happy rands spot was rudely and loudly interrupted by Sergeant Bills phone ringing.

Ian spent way too long talking about a trip Swellendam he did with Bill and Chris, during the telling of which Bills phone rang again. Something to do with us helping Swellendam to host Conference next year.



[Newlands Rotary Club Runner Calendar](#)

## FUTURE FIXTURES

### Year Planner

Please advise the secretary promptly of any additions or changes

#### **April 2016**

Mon 18 Ordinary

Mon 25 Business

**Fri 29 – District**

**Sat 30 Conference**

#### **May 2016**

Mon 2 No Meeting – Public Holiday

Mon 9 Partners

Mon 16 Ordinary

Mon 23 Ordinary

Mon 30 Business

#### **June 2016**

**Fri 24 Induction Dinner**

**Happy Anniversary**

22 April  
Mike & Pat Young

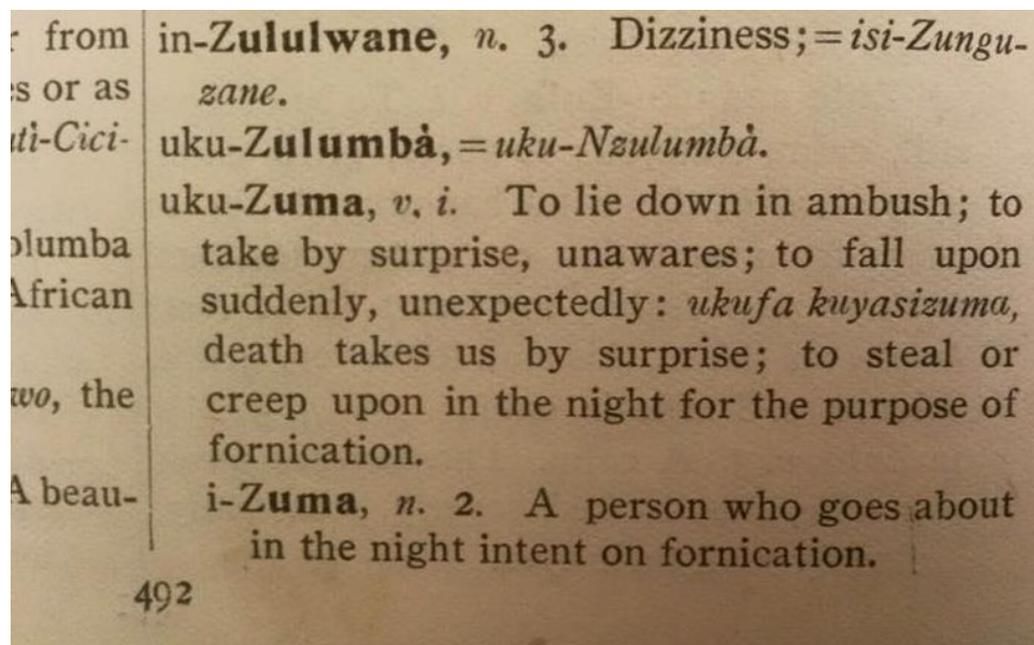
**Happy  
Birthday**

19 April  
Ian Pursch

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## DICTIONARY

It seems this came from an isiZulu – English dictionary published by the Lovedale Mission in 1915:



Thanks Mike!

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## UMPIRES AND SCORERS

DATE	18 April	25 April	2 May	9 May
MEETING	Ordinary	Business	No Meeting	Partners
SERGEANT	Wybe Meinesz	John Stephenson	<b>Public Holiday</b>	Regine le Roux
4 WAY TEST/ OBJECT	Shân Biesman- Simons	Lucian Pitt		Tinus de Jongh
GRACE & TOAST	Janey Ball	Eric Diazenza		Rochelle Malherbe
ATTENDANCE	Michael Walwyn	Lew Botha		Andy Ismay
FELLOWSHIP	Peter Henshilwood	Tony van der Lith		Pippa McLeod
MINUTES	Richard House	Bill Holland		Menno de Wet
COMMENT	Glynis Menné	Christine Calothi		Johan Beukman
THANK SPEAKER	Jana Forrester			Graham Finlayson
INTRO SPEAKER	Chris Beech			John Winship

### Invited GUEST SPEAKERS

- 18 Apr **Anneke Eichstedt** –  
*Global Grant PhD  
student*
- 9 May **Cllr Suzette Little** – *City  
of Cape Town MOU -  
Masi ECD*
- 16 May **Dr Michele Youngelson**  
– *Teens project “Your  
Future”*

If you cannot do your job on the day, please find someone who can do it instead of you, then contact the Sergeant on the day to update the roster. Please don't leave this until the Monday afternoon – let the Sergeant know in advance if you have not been able to arrange a swap. If you are going to be away for particular future meetings let Peter Ennis know.

There is a fine line between a numerator and a denominator.



Only a fraction of you will understand this.



Some people appreciate these jokes, some don't, and the division is clear.

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## Rotary Club of Newlands Office Bearers

Colin Burke	President	colinburke@mweb.co.za
Lucian Pitt	Secretary	secretary@newlands.org.za
Peter Ennis	Treasurer	treasurer@newlands.org.za
Chris Beech	President Elect	chris@aaam.co.za
Brian Pickup	Community Service	brianp@automac.co.za
Melinda Stapleton	Club Service	mjstapleton@webafrica.org.za
Jenny Ibbotson	International & Vocational Service	jennyi@mweb.co.za
Chris Beech	Membership	chris@aaam.co.za
Wybe Meinesz	Past President	wybe@insectcontrol.co.za
Regine le Roux	Public Relations	rotary@reputationmatters.co.za
Johan Beukman	Youth Service	jbeukman@netactive.co.za

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## Books for the World

For all educational school books and novels for age from early education to High school

**CONTACT: FRANCOISE NDAYIZIGIYE 0737317056**

**St Anthony's Catholic Church, Ndabeni Street, Langa**

