



WEEKLY MEETING Minutes
Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Annie Holtby, Carolyn Mullin (zoom), Frank Adamson, Hugh Graham, Bob Eamer, Mel Groom, Collins Acheampong, Dave Sherlock, Paul Snack, Janet Cripps, Dave Schulz, Lance Wiebe. Speakers Cathy Henry, Mario de Divitiis, Rotary Club of St Catharines South members Rob Carvoni Committee Member, Debbie Garneau Treasurer, James Hall President Elect (with NHS), and Dan Toppari Past President.

Welcome Guests – Collins Speakers Cathy Henry, Mario de Divitiis, Rotary Club of St Catharines South members Rob Carvoni Committee Member, Debbie Garneau Treasurer, James Hall President Elect (with NHS), and Dan Toppari Past President.

1. Land Acknowledgement – Hugh

We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

2. Toast & National Anthem – Bob

- a) To the King and Canada, To the Office of the President of United States, and To the President of Rotary International
- b) National Anthem

3. 4-WAY TEST – Bob

Of the things we think, say, or do
Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build good will and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

4. Invocation – Janet

Go into this week with the attitude that your peace, your health of mind and your heart mean more than getting everything done.
That your smile matters. That feeling rested matters. That holding the hands of your loved ones matter.

So pause lots, function at a pace that doesn't pull you apart.
Honour the things that make you feel good inside, the things that make you feel alive.
Give time to those things this week. Make time the gift it is by giving it to what really matters to you.

S.C. Lourie

President's Report, Correspondence and Announcements – Collins

We'll go immediately to our presentation so there's time for questions at the end.

Guest Speaker Introduction – Annie introduced Cathy Henry and Mario De Divitiis.

Cathy is well known to a number of us. Past President of the Rotary Club of St Catharines South in 2006, Cathy has been Honorary President of the May Court Club of St Catharines and President of the Association of May Court Clubs of Canada, 1998 (continued partnership from then through the years for various health initiatives in Niagara). She was Chair of Winter Dreams 2000-2006, raising awareness and funds for Hospice Niagara and Chair of Take it to Heart 2006-2012, raising funds for the Cardiac Cath Lab at the SC Hospital. Within Rotary, Cathy has served as AG Area 6 District 7090, Chair of District 7090 International Service Committee 2016-2019, Chair District 7090 Gift of Life 2024 going forward and **Chair of BeCauseWeCare - a Rotary May Court initiative to bring a Ronald McDonald Family Room to Niagara 2024-going forward.**

And, please also warmly welcome Mario De Divitiis. Currently the CEO for Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Central Ontario, Mario is an active volunteer within Niagara and is current Chair of the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre and a Past Board member for Brock University. A proud family man, husband to Rachel and father of two daughters, Mario comes from a family of 9 brothers and sisters, all currently living and operating businesses in Niagara.

5. Presentation. Mario went first.

I'd like to share the context of Ronald McDonald House Charities. **There are 16 houses across Canada – all look different. The Hamilton House is a 6 minute walk to the McMaster Hospital. It's a home away from home.** There, staff serve children with trauma, oncology and early birth – three families that are with us right now have had babies born @ 23 weeks. Hamilton's Ronald McDonald House originally had 15 bedrooms – it was extended to 40. **There are just under 400 Houses in the world. We have no municipal, provincial or national funding.** The government doesn't know where to put us, what category to assign? One thing you need to know is that at McDonald's if you round up your bill, the difference goes to McDonald House. It costs those staying there \$12 a day if they can afford it. **An average stay is 18 days. One Welland family had a 200 day stay and their generation, 25-35 age group, has trouble getting their first house – when you have a sick child, costs tend to increase.** This Welland couple had their home robbed twice while they were with their child in Hamilton.

McMaster doesn't have private rooms. They have pods with 4 sick kids in the room.

Especially in a new marriage, having a sick child creates a big stress on a new marriage. Danielle and Tyler's baby was 22 weeks at birth. Tyler quit his job and moved in with Danielle's parents in Waterloo. McDonald House is a home away from home.

Volunteers make breakfast, do the prepping and fill a back pack with snacks and sandwiches for the day at the hospital where food is expensive. Our houses don't leave the siblings out – the whole family moves in. Mountainview homes renovated our eating area. There's a full gym and it sees a lot of use from 12-4 am! You can receive a massage from the students, there's a library, a game room, indoor and outdoor space, a Serenity Garden. The Descamp family from Lincoln has spent 227 nights. Their son Nate had a rare heart condition – his heart would stop but no one knew why. So, it was back to the hospital and Ronald McDonald House.

The RMHC keeps track of costs. The average stay is 17 days. To stay in a hotel and eat and pay for gas for those 17 days would cost \$9000. Yearly, there are 4M\$ savings! We also have a cart on wheels in the hospital, no cost to parents with their kids. **The Family Room at the McMaster Hospital saw 150,000 family members in a year. No cost to the families yet offering for example, colouring books, access to a kitchen and to a phone.**

The goal is to bring a Family Room to Niagara. Visualise the 4th Floor of SC Hospital; the Children's Ward – all on one floor. May Court and Rotary Club of St Catharines South wanted to help when I spoke with them. The Family Room to be built like their model homes.

The Building Model in Ontario. We'll paint the whole hallway where the big donor tree is. Kid friendly – nature, animals, healthy food including vegan. It's ONLY for paediatrics. Local family lost child at 3 months. They said that 'if we'd had any help, we'd have appreciated it.' They raised \$50,000 for this cause. **'When you support a child, you're helping the family to cope.'**

Cathy. When Mario came to speak to us, we knew in 5 minutes that we were going to help. The May Court Club agreed to join us in that help. We could approach 14 clubs. If we all got together, it'd be a wonderful initiative. Rotary Club of SC South has pledged \$300,000 to finance the room + \$150,000 to do upkeep. 50% of the kids that go to McMaster now are from Niagara.

The committee **'BecauseWeCare'** formed a committee for a fund raising **Gala on October 5th at Club Roma.** Platinum service, Live and Silent auctions, Children's Choir- all filmed by Cogeco! There will be a permanent wall for those donating \$2500 (Bronze Level) and above. Debbie is our treasurer. **We can put you ad into the program – we're well on our way! We need you to get the word out. It's \$250 a ticket for the Gala with probably \$100 tax deductible.** There will be live and silent auctions on line October 1-5. Some of the prizes include Mercedes Benz E Car, Week at Cathy's home in Jamaica, another trip being arranged to be auctioned, Tennis Bracelet, Diamond Pendant, a 250 litre of single malt whiskey made in Scotland.

Please consider coming. Each club who comes will be highlighted.

Collins. Thank you very much Cathy and Mario. **We'll discuss our participation at the board meeting next week!**

(August 28th!)

6. Rotary Moment and Happy Loonies

Annie. Before Covid, our club did an annual prepping for the main meal – dinner. It was a wonderful thing to do for a number of years as a group (participants changed each year to accommodate everyone who wanted to be there!)

Mel My youngest daughter was one of those 22 week old babies. She is now 26 and doing great!

Dave S. Happy to find all about Ronald McDonald Houses!

Paul S. So blessed my kids are happy!

Janet. I'm thinking of what we can do at EL Crossley!

Frank. We were at your club for your first presentation. I'm sure we'll have a table.

Ron. We ran a corn booth at the Rib Fest. We started with pretzels. All fundraising is going to Ronald McDonald House.

Cathy. Grateful that we were invited here. For the Gala, we have tables of 8 or 10. You'd be recognised the night of the gala. I've worked with Frank before on initiatives.

Mario. It means so much to be welcomed today. Lovely to meet you. Happy to belong to NHS and provide a space!

Debbie. Just happy that I found the room! Happy to be here! I'm riding with Frank on the 21st!

Next meeting is a Board Meeting on August 28. All members are welcome.

September 4. No Meeting. We have our evening serving on Thursday, Sept. 5., Last Bandshell Concert for 2024.

September 11. Guest Speaker is PDG Lisa Bishop speaking about her personal experience with Polio Vaccination in India earlier this year.

September 13. Rotary Clubs of Fonthill and Welland Golf Tournament. We're still accepting Silent Auction items. Call Annie.

September 14. Town of Pelham 6 Year Anniversary of opening of MCC. We've got a table 10-4 that day.

September 21. Ride for Polio has room for riders. Room for donations! Check Clubrunner Event Page.