

**WEEKLY MEETING AGENDA**

February 24 2021– (Zoom 38)

Zooming: Hugh Graham, Heather Scott, David Schulz, Paul Snack, Mike Taylor, Paul Allen, Bob Eamer, Andy Glavac, Mel Groom, Annie Holtby, Ann Harrison, Jennifer McQuestion, Lance Wiebe, Carolyn Mullin, Keith McConkey, Kevin Vallier, Christian Baranowski, John Cappa.

1. Open meeting: – Welcome everyone & welcome to our speaker, Jennifer McQuestion who Heather will introduce later.

2. Land Acknowledgement: **John C**

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.

3. Toast: **Kevin**

To the Queen and Canada, To the Office of the President of United States, and To the President of Rotary International

4. 4-WAY TEST: **Keith**

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?

5. Invocation: **Mel**

‘Calm’ by Shawn L Bird  
In times of fear and panic,  
Let us be a force of calm.  
Let those who are trembling,  
find us safe to lean upon.  
May we be the voice of reason.  
May we comfort the oppressed.  
May we show our compassion  
to those who’re most distressed.

6. President’s Report/Correspondence/Announcements:

- Hugh held up a cheque, our final share of the Rotary Mega TV Auction. It was for \$11,129. Hugh was asked whether he thought that indicated a successful auction. Hugh said yes, given the circumstances and asked Annie. She added that there was another

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\$2845 in cash on top for a total of \$14,014. Credit has to go to our items bringing in almost 10% more value than last and other previous years. And it's really each of our club members who made auction successful with their successful canvassing of those donations.

- Dave Schulz received our cheque for \$500 and the added \$100 from the draw for Jackpot Flowers' buyers. Question arose about a tax receipt for that \$100. It was felt because it was a cheque from Jackpot Flowers to recipient, it wouldn't be a good idea.
- Ann brought the Town's thank you for Rotary's participation in their successful Family day Goose Chase. Lots of people photographed with the Rotary Wheel. Town may do something for Easter so we should think of another way to participate.
- Yesterday Rotary had its 116<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Jack Amico, PDG for 2014-15, passed earlier this week. PDG Jack was a member of the Rotary Club of West Seneca and will be missed. Also to be missed by Rotarians and especially Youth Exchange people is Bon Knipe of Batavia, a huge Youth Exchange program booster for their club. Fond farewell them both.
- Lance had his first Town Canada Day Meeting. They're looking at something live with Covid in mind. A drive by is involved. Stay tuned.
- Frank joined after a Brantford Zoom meeting. He said that there's a possibility of a grant to money for the Arches via Teresa Quinlan and the Village. It may cancel out the money we'd set aside for further support.
- Hugh congratulated Carolyn for her appointment as a board member of Innovate Niagara. Congrats, Carolyn. You'll be an involved and proactive director.

## 7. Speaker: **Jennifer McQuestion – Women's Place**

Introduction: **Heather**

Jennifer McQuestion has been the Community Engagement Manager for Women's Place since 2012 and is responsible for the agency's volunteer program, public education program and various aspects of the agency's public relations efforts such as social media and website content. She also supports the agency's development (fundraising) department. Prior to working with Women's Place, Jennifer was a teacher and spent 13 years working at Ontario's Legislative Assembly. For many of those years, she was Legislative Page Program coordinator. Jennifer has a passion for public education and for raising awareness around the issues of dating and domestic violence.

There is still a stigma with domestic violence and often people think they will never know anyone who will be impacted by it. If you haven't before, today you can reflect that you do know someone. I lived this life for 12 years and it was through the support of Angela Carter and the Dale Carnegie Course that I said the words out loud for the first time and began to heal.

**Jennifer McQuestion's** presentation.

Jennifer started by thanking us for our grant proposal and showed us photos of the desks and chairs they will be ordering for each client's room at the shelter. She said they'll be perfect for the distancing they're experiencing with Covid but a dedicated study/writing space will be great going forward, too.

Women's Place's Mission is to stop abuse and violence against women and children by providing safety through shelter, counseling, education, advocacy and community partnerships.

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'Education piece is a big part of what we do. Trying to do more advocacy is also a big piece. In building community partnerships we're trying to address mental health, physical wellbeing, all issues that can arise. We do envision a community where women and children live without violence.

Last year the number of support calls was 3,309. We're seeing a steady increase. We also have 24 hour support lines and moved quickly to add text lines because of Covid. We immediately establish if they're safe and once established, make a safety plan. There's an emergency shelter at Nova in Niagara Falls. Donations of perishable food are graciously accepted. The shelters aren't home but definitely a safe place while the women figure out the next steps. The government is helping with hotel stays if they're needed. Counseling sessions are happening virtually. Our Family Court Support Worker can help with legal issues, especially custody. We can help with housing. There's a 7-13 year wait for Transitional housing. Most of our clients are placed between a few months and a year! Our child and youth worker is working virtual right now. Volunteers want to help but most volunteer roles temporarily suspended with Covid. Public education is a way to get change. It would be ideal if as a society we focused more on proactive instead of reactive ways to end abuse. Ontario Curriculum includes aspects of healthy relationships. Women's Place can send someone into classrooms to support an understanding of healthy relationships. Students in abusive homes may not be aware of healthy behaviours. What is abuse? Any effort to gain control; any act to undermine your emotional wellbeing; physical abuse; mental abuse can make you feel crazy, worthless; verbal abuse includes name calling, yelling at you, using offensive and aggressive language; sexual abuse is any action that forces or pressures that make you take part in sexual activity; digital abuse is used to intimidate, bully, harass, control or stalk someone; other types include financial, property, pet, social, cultural, spiritual, isolation – this last has given abuser carte blanche in Covid lockdown – no one to witness abuse.

When lockdowns happen, the phones go quiet. When Covid rules relax, phone calls increase. Loss of jobs have upped abuse (abuser has lost control in one aspect of his life.) It's important to check in with friends if you think there might be a problem. Ask questions that will get a yes or no answer.

Women during Covid are not sure if it's safe to go to Shelters. (It is very safe with Covid protocols)

Be non-judgmental. When you see abuse, stand up, speak up.

Question about rigidity of lockdown for Niagara. There's been an increase in suicides. Mental health side is more important than Covid lockdown. **Jennifer**. Our partner is Public Health.

There's a push to have front line staff vaccinated. Our priority is that they are safe.

Question about joining us at our Family Day Event when it can happen again. We invite community organisations. We'll invite you. **Jennifer** said it would be a good opportunity to approach them.

Question about finances. **Jennifer** said they need to raise another \$550,000 on top of government funds received. Our annual Big Book Sale (the Book Riot) brings in over \$72,000. We couldn't do it this year. We've done a Fundraising calendar. We're thinking of a 50/50 draw.

Question about testing staff. **Jennifer**. It's not done every two weeks. Screening processes are stringent. If someone has symptoms/ tests positive, they have to go home and test negative before returning.

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For further information please contact [www.womensplacesn.org](http://www.womensplacesn.org) or Nova House 1 905-356-5800 for Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and surrounding areas or Serenity Place 905-788-0113 for Welland, Port Colborne, Wainfleet, Pelham and surrounding areas.

Thanks: **Hugh**

Jennifer, we're providing a \$500 donation to start addressing your needs. We're happy you're the next recipient of Jackpot Flowers' donation. We've also asked for a matching grant for Women's Shelter needs. We also thank our speakers with a donation in their name to the Pelham Library to reflect our support for literacy. Thank you for your presentation today. Your organisation and front line people do incredible and necessary work in the community.

8. Birthdays: None  
Rotary Anniversaries: Frank (Feb 01/91); John J. (Feb 09/10)
9. Rotary Moment: **Carolyn**  
It's the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Rotarian, now 'Rotary' Magazine. In the recent March issue, there's a section on 'what it's like' – Rotarians' stories of life changing experiences. On that jumped out with thoughts of our next week's speaker Charlotte, was 'if you agree to host a student from a foreign country for several months in your home, you will host them in your heart for the rest of your lives.'
10. Happy Loonies: **Lance** Because of time constraints, Happy Loonies are postponed until next week. Executive Decision.