



Newsletter

INSIDE — Read what our President and our next President say

Editor's Note

Unprecedented Times

By David Israelson

Welcome to our newsletter. We're certainly in new territory.

All of us in our Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club have had many experiences in our lives — challenges, opportunities, times and places where we can pitch in. It's safe to say though,



that none of us has ever experienced anything like this — life in a pandemic.

The good news is that we are making a difference. Our club is meeting regularly (online, of course) and as a club and individuals we are stepping up — staying active in the community, contributing and raising funds, being active and, just as importantly, checking up on each other.

To those of us who have lost loved ones, friends or acquaintances to COVID-19, we're thinking of you. We're thinking about everyone who is struggling to make sense, to manage and cope. As individuals and members, we'll try our best to do our part. Stay safe, Niagara-on-the-Lake! We'll see each other on the other side — and we will get there eventually.



President & New President

Thoughts from our outgoing President John Boot ...

What a Year!

By John Boot

My year as president of Niagara-on-the-lake has been interesting to say the least. It started with a bang and ended with a whimper. Let me explain.

The Bang

As is our club's tradition the incoming president is invited to the Rotary Convention. If you're lucky you go somewhere you haven't been before. I was lucky — I got to go to Hamburg. Of course, I took my favourite travel companion — my adventurous wife Fran.

The convention was inspiring, and we met many amazing people. We extended our trip to visit a number of cities in Central Europe. There were Rotarians everywhere we went. Once back in Canada I officially started my presidency.

Now, I'm not really comfortable in front of a crowd, so it took a while to get used to. It was interesting that the occasional mistake, or forgotten step in club protocol, wasn't that big a deal. It seemed the members appreciated a less-than-smooth operator. Rotary is big on setting goals. My problem was that our previous president, Nadja, did such a good job that the club was awarded the best club in District 7090. We weren't likely to win it twice in a row, so I

focused on maintaining what Nadja and our club had built. Here are a few highlights. A wonderful Canada Day, an amazing Holiday House Tour. We had a great exchange student, we got a global grant for a well in Guatemala, we had engaging speakers, and more. We also increased our membership to more than 75. There are so many good things to mention. But then something happened!



The Whimper

Who would have thought we'd have a pandemic, and our world as we know it would literally stop. We couldn't hold meetings at the Community Centre and we cancelled our fundraisers. First, the Ice Wine event, then Canada Day and worst of all, our biggest fundraiser, the Holiday House Tour. We worked out the kinks in our Zoom meetings, but it's never quite the same as meeting over lunch and having multiple conversations with our Rotarian friends. We didn't lose any members to COVID-19, but, sadly, we lost our good friends Bill Francombe, Ian MacEwan, Franco Oliveri and John Aurandt. No one is sure when we can meet in person again but I'm sure Rotarians will continue to focus on Service above Self. As I hand the torch over to Ken, he's starting on with a Zoom, but I'm sure he'll end with a Bang.

... And What a Year to Come!

By Ken Schander, Incoming President

When asked to be president of our Rotary Club, I said yes, not because I wanted the position, but because members of our club take turns serving as leader. Every year we choose a new President Elect. I am taking my turn with the understanding that as president I will be what the ancients called *primus inter pares*, or first among equals.

This is not my club. I joined less than five years ago, having never before belonged to a service organization. (My experience in Rotary so far would indicate that I was not lured into a secret society or cult 😊). I am proud to be a Rotarian and feel blessed to be one of the more than 75 members of the Rotary Club of NOTL. While I get to “direct traffic” for the next 12 months, I hope you will see me as an equal.

I want our club to continue to be what I relish about it. You are my friends, and, with you I have found ways to help our community and our world. Service above self, as we say.

The Rotarian’s four-way test of the things we think, say, or do comes close to being inspired. We repeat it weekly because we want it to be the reflex way we think, say and do. Don’t we? I know it works both ways. I want the things said about me to be the TRUTH. I want them to be FAIR. Just like you do. Our public “confession” makes us accountable to each other and less likely to disappoint our fellow Rotarians.

Don’t expect something better come July 1. There will be differences, but John Boot (our soon-to-be Past President), Patricia Murenbeeld (our soon-to-be President Elect) and I are working together with our board as we plan for the future.

I had hoped that the induction of our new club directors would follow the pattern of previous years and be an outdoor social event. Instead it will take place virtually when District 7090’s District Governor, Frank Adamson, joins us via Zoom for our noon meeting on July 7.

Frida says goodbye ... for now

Our 2019 exchange student Frida Nielsen had to leave early, but she's in our hearts, and vice versa — here's her message to our club

I never imagined having to say goodbye over an email. This whole time I had this really good goodbye-speech planned out, and I was going to give hugs to everyone.

Unfortunately, that didn't work out and I'm so sad that [because of COVID-19] I had to leave without a proper goodbye. I hope you understand.

I got to spend seven fantastic months with you, and I must say it's been the best seven months in my life. I can't express in words how happy I am that I ended up in District 7090 with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club.

From the first day you took me in and treated me as family. I remember the first meeting I attended, and I had to go up and speak. I was so nervous and all I could say was "Hi I'm Frida and I'm from Sweden." Today I can laugh about it but at that moment I was shaking.

But all of you just gave me a warm smile and welcomed me, and for that I'm forever thankful. And after that, I wasn't nervous to go up and speak anymore.

During this year I got to develop so much, both as a person and with my language. Thanks to you I got to experience things I would never have been able to do. I also got the chance to get to know so many people and learn fascinating stories that have inspired me now that I'm back in Sweden.

All of you are amazing people for doing this, taking in students year after year and giving them an experience for life. My family and I

want to express our gratitude for giving me this incredible chance.

When I arrived here last summer I got to meet two of your past exchange students, Jean and Heloise. The first thing they told me was that I had arrived at the best Rotary Club ever, and I was excited to see what they meant by that. I agree with Jean and Heloise, you definitely are the best.

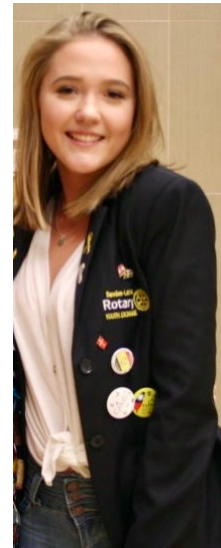
Thank you, to all of you who invited me to your home, took me out to do something or just talked to me at the meetings. All of you helped me grow as a person and get a bigger perspective on life.

This is not my goodbye ... it's a see-you-soon. I will definitely be back and visit, I hope next summer. And when that happens I will thank all of you properly and give you hugs.

I want you to know that I'm back in Sweden, surrounded by family, friends, and having so much fun. I am safe and happy, ready to tell everyone my stories from Canada. Even if this year ended early and not as planned, I'm okay. Life happens and you just have to go with it. My journey just started, all thanks to you!

Stay safe and give the next exchange student just as much love as you gave me.

Hugs,
Frida



Doctors Without Borders – Our Club Steps Up

We Are What We Share

In April, NOTL Rotary Club chose to support [*Doctors Without Borders*](#) in the global fight against COVID-19. We've stepped up. Thank you, Niagara-on-the-Lake!



Thank you for sharing with those facing COVID-19 in the beleaguered refugee camps of Bangladesh and the slums of Lima, Peru, and in countries where healthcare systems have collapsed, and communities that are too poor to provide hygiene or minimal safety.



Health care heroes of Doctors Without Borders risk everything to save life, give dignity, treasure each human right to health, to just have that chance.

Doctors Without Borders is at work in 78 countries hardest hit by COVID-19. And you helped — the funds raised provide care, hygiene and life-saving equipment, and you've got doctors into the field.

In April, NOTL Rotary Club raised more than \$50,000.00 to help those in need.

Thank you!

Contributed by Jodey Porter

Well, Well ...

El Carrizal Water Well Project

The water well at El Carrizal in Guatemala has been drilled, and, with much difficulty, the casing has been installed. Today, under very difficult circumstances, with the monsoon rains teeming down the drill, the rig and trucks exited the site (just). Ted Vanderbilt Zalm and his crew are to be wholeheartedly congratulated for completing the task under the most adverse of conditions.



Reported by Martin Quick May 10

The Local Angle

Donations in our area help in the new post-COVID-19 world

Our club is trying to focus on helping people most affected by today's new post-COVID reality. That's why we are donating a month's worth of food to help St George's breakfast program.

To help much needed charities, that help the most vulnerable, we are donating \$4,500 to the Kristen French Children Advocacy Program.

The Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre Niagara is a child focused centre that provides a trauma-informed coordinated approach to investigation, intervention, treatment and prosecution in child abuse cases. Its staff and its community supporters are actively involved in assisting their programs through a number of fundraising

events. Many of these events have been cancelled or postponed until the fall because of the pandemic.



Kristen French
Child Advocacy
Centre Niagara

We're also proud to donate \$1,500 each to the RAFT, Westview Center for Women and After Schools program, for a total of \$4,500. Through the United Way our donation will be matched, doubling the amount these charities will receive in this particular time of need.

The Rotary Club of Niagara on the Lake will continue to support the most vulnerable people in this time of much need.
Contributed by Paul Lalonde

Yes, it's true! Rotary Garage Sale this fall!

The Fundraising Committee has been brainstorming "new ideas" to continue supporting worthy causes and new needs that have arisen during this time of COVID-19. And, we have come up with a great idea — Garage Sale Shopping.

Yes — we are planning our first multi-location ROTARY GREAT GARAGE SALE for late September or early October. We'll share the exciting details soon.

Meanwhile, Rotarians and Friends of Rotary can help today! One way is to get your stuff ready for the fall Rotary Great Garage Sale.

Clean out your cupboards, basements, and garages, find the treasure trove you want to donate. It's a great time to "edit" your stuff — find new homes for all those household collectibles you saved "just in case". Well, maybe you can't even remember for what.

Now is the time. Set them aside to donate for this fundraising event. Your neighbours may even want to help by doing the same thing.



In August, we'll contact all our members with information on which location to drop off the special items you have set aside. Or, if it's easier, we can arrange to have them picked up.

I've already started. Three boxes already — even my treasured Elvis bust, which I have packed and moved with for more than 30 years, is ready for a new home.

Let's sell our stuff for Service above Self, I don't know about you, but I can hardly wait until it's safe to meet again in person.

Contributed by Lynne LeGallais

It's our Newsletter — and yours! Please send your news!

Our Rotary Niagara-on-the-Lake Newsletter is for all of us — an electronically printed gathering place to share our stories, ideas, and news. So please share! We welcome your contributions.

How? It's easy! Send your news to me directly at: david.birrel@gmail.com, Put "Rotary News" in the subject line,.

Let's make sure everyone finds out about the good and important work we do.

Service above Self.
