



Spinofff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA
Caroline DeWitt, President

January 5 2021 Meeting Scribe: Rob Shaw-Wood
Online meeting

Program: Experiencing Rotary's Adventure in High Technology,

Meeting video

<https://youtu.be/sebGUHpcyJA>

The Meeting Begins

President Caroline DeWitt opened the 25th meeting of this Rotary Year, and 36th meeting on-line, at 12:35 PM, welcoming us with best wishes for the new year. This week it was RCWO internet guru, **Brett Brooking**, who ran the starting *O Canada* video choosing an instrumental version showing our flag waving backed by the sun on the horizon

The **Invocation** was provided by **Frank Cranston** who spoke of the Covid crisis, the promise of the new vaccines, and the debt we owe our front-line workers as we look forward to the end of the pandemic this year. In the unexpected absence of **Ron Scott**, District Governor **Hadi Mortada** stepped in as **Toastmaster** and reminded us that January is Rotary Vocational Service Month. We are encouraged to mentor those just starting out in their professional lives. There is information on the rotary.org site about how to get involved and **DG Hadi** encouraged **President Caroline** to devote some attention to this issue over the next few weeks. The toast was to Vocational Service Month.

Guests at the meeting: Bob Hillier (Nepean-Kanata Rotary club); our two presenters, Matteo Bonetti and Nikolai Leduc; Tony Watkins (Zoomed in from his winter home in Barbados) Vijay Dube (**Girija Dube's** husband); and Leslie Dienen, **Susan Dienen's** daughter and mother of Matteo. **DG Hadi** later noted that he had a guest as well, Copal Afi.

President Caroline then informed us that **Gord Leverton** is now a Club member. **Gord** will participate in the Cash Calendar and Rotary at Work Committees (Note: RaW Committee, chaired by **Jen Soucy**, works with LiveWorkPlay and similarly focussed organizations to help people with disabilities enter the work force). **Gord** had been a PP of RC Quinte Sunrise and its Vocational Service chair and a past Area Governor in our District,

Announcements

1. January is Vocational Service Month at Rotary. Additional information will be forthcoming at future meetings.
2. The October 2020 virtual concert against polio raised \$2831.61 which is shared with two other Rotary clubs. Our share is \$1274. Thanks are due to **Graeme Fraser** and former member Brian Foster for pulling it all together.
3. The Can-a-Day food Drive in November netted \$2250 in cheque donations and 4 boxes of food, all to the Ottawa Food Bank. Perhaps a Spring food drive should be next, timed for the Easter campaign at the Food Bank?
4. Christmas cheques were delivered to our contacts at the St Elias Banquet Centre: Zare Kesyan, Brian Khouzani, Cecilia Makeri, Hilbert Garcia, Samar Helou and Dusan Durokov . All were very appreciative of the gifts.
5. A message from **DG Hadi** was read concerning the work of The Rotary Foundation (TRF), which highlighted the specific example of a Global Grant to RCs in Honduras and Pennsylvania to provide vision services. Sight evaluations were conducted on 1200 individuals and 600 pairs of prescription eye wear were supplied. (week 27 of TRF messages at http://rotary7680.org/2020_TRF_52_Week_Message.pdf)
6. We are encouraged to donate meeting fees to TRF, local charities and food banks, or to other foundations.
7. The three funding pillars of our service activities, i.e. Mums for Thanksgiving, the Cash Calendar, and Music for Humanities will all resume in 2021.

The Presentation

Our guest speakers today, Matteo Bonetti and Nikolai Leduc, are members of Interact and participated in the 2020 Adventure in High Technology. This is a program for senior high school students in Districts 7010, 7070 and 7040 coordinated by RC Nepean Kanata They were with us today to report on their experience.

Perhaps 16-17 students participated in the 2020 on-line event, mostly from Ontario. Matteo was introduced by his GRANDMOTHER **Susan Diening**(gasp!!) and Nikolai by our Youth Service Committee Chair, **Jill Yarnell**. Matteo is a grade 10 student at Sacred Heart High School in Stittsville who has participated on some of our past fundraising activities. Nikolai, already an entrepreneur with four employees doing odd jobs in the neighbourhood, is in grade 12 at Glebe Collegiate.

Both reported very favourably on the presentations. Whereas they started out with relatively fixed ideas of career paths they wanted to follow, the seminars opened up many related possibilities for their consideration and left them with many more questions than answers. Especially memorable were seminars on:

-autonomous cars, their contribution to world welfare, and how local local cultural traits will be incorporated as design features;

-the flat and welcoming management structure at Google.

-game programming; 3-D printing; and satellite communications.

Finally, both our speakers mentioned with awe the half hour session that featured Sir Terry Matthews, founder of companies including Mitel and Newbridge Networks, to talk about entrepreneurship and high technology.

Matteo and Nikolai were thanked by **Ron Doll**, who also fielded a few comments from club members. **DG Hadi** stated that youth are our future, and that he would like both our presenters to return to us in five or ten years and explain how the seminar has influenced their career paths.

Happy Dollars

Was handled with aplomb by our own Sarge, **Rob Shaw-Wood** (who also deserves special dispensations for being the day's editor as well).

Miriam Fraser, formerly of RC Nepean Kanata, spoke of her own previous involvement in organizing Rotary youth seminars, and of the hard work that it entailed for the sponsoring clubs. She very much appreciated the enthusiasm that was displayed by our two presenters.

Bill Rolph commended both speakers for the clarity of their presentations, especially given the complexities of their subject matter.

DG Hadi noticed that **Rob Shaw-Wood** was no longer sporting a moustache (it was the victim of a New Year's resolution) but felt compelled to add that its absence did not make him look any younger. **Hadi**, who is old as well, then introduced his guest, Copal Afi, who had been a childhood family friend in Lebanon and was now working in Ottawa.

Copal said that she hoped to be increasingly involved in our meetings going forward.

Hadi then concluded by ribbing **Graeme Fraser** about an alleged need to comport himself in an acceptable manner. Perhaps they had been exchanging private messages? I have no clue but I have to report faithfully what I hear. It is in our code as Spinoff editors.

Graeme Fraser was next in the queue and was thrilled that Copal might be considering joining our club. He was expecting two other membership applications to be approved shortly. He concluded, tongue in cheek, with the less than helpful observation that we seem to do better at recruiting new members during pandemics and therefore members should discourage anti-Covid vaccinations.

Gord Leverton was happy to have become a new club member. He observed that few Interact members or other students that we involve in Rotary actually decide to join Rotary in later life, and that we should make specific efforts to recruit them. **President Caroline** suggest that both of our presenters today should be added to "our list" of individuals whom we keep in mind as invitees to our events. (We have such a list?) Nikolai supported **Gord's** suggestion that we should reach out to promising individuals as they probably would never think of Rotary otherwise.

Closing remarks

Brett Brooking announced that the full list of cash calendar winners for 2020 would be on the RCWO website shortly.

President Caroline announced that next week's speaker would be our own Past President **Nigel Lever**, to speak about his experiences as an immigrant to Canada. She then sent us back to our home recreation rooms at 1.44 pm. for yet another week of social distancing.

Tuesday, 12 January 2021 12:30pm

Past President **Nigel Lever**- *My immigration Story*

Intro and thanks: **Andrew Young**

Editor: **Rocco Disipio**

Toastmaster: **Fred Christie** Invocation: **Susan Diening**

Meeting at Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82444180906>

See **President Caroline** message Jan 10 for log-in details and agenda

