



Spinofff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA
Caroline DeWitt, President

April 27 2021 Editor: Don Butler
Online meeting

Program: Prof. Ian Lee, Sprott School, Carleton University “Analysis of the Federal Budget”

Meeting video

<https://youtu.be/xV2INugOFPk>

We begin

President Caroline DeWitt, started this 42nd meeting of the Rotary Year and 53rd online noting the current media buzz on Covid 19 and vaccinations. After a video of O Canada sung in our two official languages, several indigenous languages and a few of the more common other languages spoken here **Ramin Alsaqqa** gave a thoughtful **invocation**. He called for thanks for the opportunity to be Rotarians who, for others, dig wells, restore sight, educate children and serve in many other ways. He cited Albert Schweitzer on how happiness comes from helping others and said Rotarians are thankful for the opportunities to do this.

Marcia Armstrong, Toastmaster, recalled how former members Art Saper and Merv Letts had admired the RC Ottawa Foundation and how it could fund the annual Adventure in Citizenship. They got the help of **Ron Scott** and set up the RCWO Charitable Foundation in September 2015. The Club foundation assets in 2019 were over \$140,000 and grew by \$60,000 in 2020. In the past four years the foundation has donated \$9000 to Community Service Committee activities and \$3000 directly to the Odawa Centre. Let us grow our foundation to do more. We toasted Art, Merv and **Ron** and the Club foundation.

Guests : Dr Ian Lee, our Speaker, Bruce Baker, guest of **Bob Harrison**, Stewart Blair, RC Smith Falls and Donna Blair (guests of **Keith Henry**) and Dennis Staples also RC Smith Falls..

Birthdays: none this week

Announcements

President Caroline

-reminded us of the 4 Way Test, the guide for Rotarian action and that April is Rotary’s Maternal and Child Health Month.

- announced that the Club will proceed the Mums for Thanksgiving fundraiser. **Rocco Disipio** . project chair, thanked the Club Board for supporting the project and and told us sales will be limited to 4500 plants are planned compared to 5700 in 2019. He listed members of the different teams

needed for the project and called on Club members to indicate their preferred areas of the city to make plant deliveries. If needed, drivers for the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation will also deliver plants.

- told us Cash Calendar campaign was under way. Chair **Ron Scott** told us the committee had been meeting for several months and organizing the advertising. Photo theme this year is nature in the Ottawa area. Photos welcome by end May please. See <https://rcwo.org/> for more info. They have already sold most of the ads for the back of the calendar and seven of the twelve \$1500 page bottom ads. It is now possible to put an ad on one half of a page bottom for \$750. Advertising pays the cost of calendar production and most of the prizes. Help by approaching possible advertisers or even by suggesting potential advertisers for the committee to follow up. We're looking to share distribution and proceeds with other charitable organizations. If you know of potential distributors, please tell the committee.

-Donations are still sought for St, Vincent relief. Details at rcwo.org again. We are in touch with the Rotary District there

-Gave us some impressive examples of the good US\$ 1000 to The Rotary Foundation (TRF) can do in various countries. TRF is a good use of our charity dollar.

-Reminded to give our meeting fees to our Club foundation, local food banks and/or other charities..

Presentation

President Caroline reminded us that Professor Ian Lee had spoken to us last September on the effects, less dire than popularly thought, of the pandemic on our economy. He has lectured all over the world including both China and Iran and has been frequently interviewed by Canadian media

Professor Lee accompanied his presentation with slides. The first slide read "Yes! We have no bananas". Lee indicated that this reflected the message of his presentation that many of the points suggested in the budget and commonly believed are not what Canada is experiencing now. View and hear the whole presentation (see link above. Start video at about the 20th minute point) but here are some highlights

Canada's economic situation

-was and is in the top third of the OECD for economic performance

- not in a Covid recession

- social safety net is very generous.

- aging population and labour shortage crisis

-an LT health care crisis

April 2021 Budget

- did not add any money to health care which is trending to be a major problem

- Rebranded social spending as investment in infrastructure

- did not focus on economic growth or productivity which is the only way to improve standard of living

The economy is growing. Real disposable income is rising. Poverty is declining. Inequality is below the OECD average and decreasing. Material well-being of Canadians is with the top of the OECD countries. The per capita net worth of Canadians is over \$300,000.

But aging will be a major problem health care costs increase.

The pandemic hit 15% of the economy hard: accommodation, food services, arts and entertainment and recreation. The rest is growing. Job loss is greatest among the least educated. But the

employment rate has been rising since early summer 2020 and right now 20 million people are working while 300,000 are not working who were working pre-pandemic.
Fiscal policy support in Canada with the changes in the budget amount to about 23% of GDP second only to the USA in the OECD.

Minster Freeland's speech spoke of the need to "punch our way out of this covid recession" but also repeatedly single out positive developments.

Worries:

Unemployment only a temporary problem. Canada is short of workers.

This budget charts no real path to economic growth. Canadian direct investment abroad is almost double business investment in Canada. People see better prospects elsewhere.

Factor productivity has increased little since the 1970 but that fact received no attention in the budget. No provision made for increased health care

While we were thinking of questions Prof. Lee added that we should read speech by former Bank of Canada Governor David Dodge on the need to deal with our fiscal shortfall and the deficits in our current account (see <https://ppforum.ca/publications/two-mountains-to-climb-canadas-twin-deficits-and-how-to-scale-them/>)

Answering **Rami Alsaqqa** Lee said the lack of productivity would show in a slow decline in the standard of living. On house prices Lee doubted there would be significant mortgage defaults and that continued immigration would keep house prices high. More houses need to be built.

To **Tom Belton** on market value assessment for municipal taxes Lee that was fairer than the alternatives but that a real estate crash would hit municipal revenues He continued that provinces might be facing budget shortfalls if the bond market would not buy their bonds. And provinces pay for health care/

Happy Dollars

Collected by **Robert Shaw Wood** from **Jim Maxwell** who will shortly celebrate his 61st wedding anniversary and **Bill Rolph** who enjoyed a zoom get together with his grandchildren and **Denzil Feinberg** who had received payment for submitting an opinion to a survey/

Close

President Caroline told us about the program for the May 4 meeting and thanked all who had worked on the meeting and closed it

Tuesday, 4 May 2021

Prof. Fred Goodwin, Carleton University, "Why is the United States such a divided country?"

Intro and Thanks: **Ron Doll**

Invocation **Carol Bell Thompson** Toastmaster: **Tom Belton**

Editor: **Rocco Disipio**

Meeting at Zoom

See **President Caroline DeWitt** message May 2 for log-in details

Tuesday, 11 May , 2021
Rich Fisher and Susan Dalati
Classification talks
