



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST
OTTAWA

Graeme Fraser, President

September 20, 2022 Editor: Don Butler

Evening meeting online

PROGRAM: Michael Curran, Kitchissippi Times: The future of Community Newspapers

Video <https://youtu.be/ckkNGleufys>

We start

President Graeme Fraser welcomed us to the 12th meeting of this Rotary Year and acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people.

He asked who had come at noon a few – and hoped we all had slept enough after watching the Queen's funeral. **Brett Brooking** ran a rock video of O Canada with mixture of scenes nature, sports and others.

Guests: Safia Ibrahim, Michael Curran, our speaker. **President Graeme** also welcomed a few members we have not seen for a while at meetings

Presentation

Gaye Moffett took the mic and introduced Michael Curran as publisher of the Ottawa Business Journal and president of Great River Media which owns OBJ, Kitchissippi Times and other publications both paper and digital. OBJ helps run a wide variety of business oriented events and cooperates with business focussed bodies such as the Ottawa Board of Trade. Curran has a degree in journalism from Carleton University is married and has four kids.

Michael then took the floor and told us the Kitchissippi Times was about 20 years old. He stressed that the paper was 100% local and exists to serve Kitchissippi. It is published monthly and 12,000 copies are delivered via Canada Post to subscribers. An additional 3000 copies are placed with certain stores and other centers for pick up. They have about 90,000 social media followers. One of its popular columns is "Early Days" by Dave Allison with stories about historical Kitchissippi. Community newspapers focus on stories about people although they devote some space to issues such as housing prices and inflation.

There are about 950 community newspapers in Canada producing a total of 14 million copies 94% of which is tabloid. Most community newspapers are “controlled circulation” which means they are free and funded with ads, grants, donations etc. KT does not lose money but does not make it either.

The pandemic hit hard. In 2020 62 community newspapers closed along with one daily. 2021 was a little better with 18 closures. When community newspapers close they usually stay closed. Local radio and TV were hit too. Asked what local retailers do when they can no longer advertise in a community newspaper Michael answered that the local retailers mostly advertise in social media and their ads are not a major factor in community newspaper funding.

Tom Belton asked for comment on the dearth of local news in community newspapers being taken over by large corporations. Michael answered this was true. Organizations like Metroland and Torstar were basically companies looking for something to wrap their flyers in. Kitchissippi Times maintains an editorial to advertisement ratio of 50% but cannot fill the role of the big newspapers.

Answering **Don Butler** on the federal tax credit available to qualifying publications, Michael said that the Kitchissippi Times did not qualify but the Ottawa Business Journal does although the application process is a pain. Michael thinks this credit does not compromise a publication's objectivity. The KT is a monthly and Michael was impressed by publications like the Low Down To Hull and Back News (Michael reacted “Love it.”) which still publish weekly

To **Shaun Hopkins** on the decline of local content in Ottawa radio over the years Michael commented that the economics of local news is not great. The closure of the Ottawa Sun and shrinkage of other publications caused staff to move to Great River publications. Michael recalled that when Caroline Phillips, a first rate journalist, was laid off he and Mark Sutcliffe his partner at the time, had been able to recruit companies like Mark Motors to contribute to creating a position for her. **Shaun Hopkins** observed that we can get national and international news from many sources but not local news. City newspapers might sell more papers if they had more local news

To **Don Butler** Michael thought that print media readership was “aging out”. Young people have different news habits and do not value daily newspapers. They will however listen to long podcasts and get news that way. Very specialized magazines have a market.

Gaye Moffett thanked Michael telling him of our donation to End Polio to mark his visit.

Announcements

-**Ron Doll** told us that wine tasting October 8 would be held at the Smokie Ridge Vineyard about an hour south of Ottawa. Minimum 10 and max 18 people. Interested ? Send Ron \$35 to reserve your spot.

-**Ron** would like someone to go with him in his car to deliver Mums

- **Ken Murray** asked for details on the Zambia project to send to a couple of people who might be able to help fund.

-**Joan Heyland** said she now has quite few hosts for Foundation Dinners she needs some people to be guests. Let her know

President's announcements

The Board last week confirmed.

· Economic Development of Poor Communities in Peru – \$3,000 will be going to help **Yves Lafontaine's** project (**Yves** feels this project is so important that he handed **President Graeme** personal cheque on Saturday for \$1,000 to be added to project funding)

· Roan Antelope Hospital, Zambia – This is in partnership with the Kingston Rotary club to support a Global Grant project being undertaken with the Rotary Club of Luanshya to refurbish the post-natal/children's ward at the hospital in the Copper Belt region of Zambia. Total project cost is \$41K and they are \$7K USD short. The project was presented at District and so other clubs will be contributing as well. There is a commitment from government to support the hospital for up to 7 years. It's seen as a solid project and there is confidence in both Rotary Clubs involved and lots of respect for the Zambia club. RCWO will be chipping in more than \$2,000.

· Shelter Box – As we usually do, we are sending \$1200 to Shelter Box Canada

-RCWO has received a Rotary Citation, "the most the most significant award a Rotary club can achieve, for 2021-22. This past year, your club demonstrated a commitment to achieve its goals, which ultimately helps strengthen Rotary and shape our future" We are one of only 9 clubs in the District that achieved this recognition.

-Need Calendars?...let know and we'll get them in your hands.

Luis Espinosa, a Rotarian from Mexico. His rental has fallen through and needs help finding a townhouse or apartment for him, his wife and two young girls. Able to help?, let **Graeme** know.

Members were needed to help check Mums maps and delivery slips and they responded.

Mums delivery drivers still needed. Each route taken by Club member will net this club around \$150. You have heard where some of those funds are going. Please let **Rocco** know if you can help

We end

Requests for Cash Calendars from **John Kersley** and others. **President Graeme** told us **Yves Lafontaine** has already sold 265 Calendars.

President Graeme told us that the name of the speaker for 27 September would be advised but he thought it would be someone who would update us on a project of interest to the club.

Corrigendum: Spinoff 13 September erred. It should have said that **Marcia Armstrong's** participation in group in a group saying goodbye to the Queen was at the Ottawa airport in 1992 and the Queen was departing by Concord.

Cash Calendar winners

<http://www.ottawarotarycalendar.com/2022-winners.html>

27 September 2022

12:30 PM

Doors open at 12:00

By ZOOM

Suan Cross: “The Invisible City” A documentary on Nairobi’s Mathare Slum

Intro and thanks **Gaye Moffett**

Spinoff: **Rich Fisher**

Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81365346181>

See President Graeme email for log-in details