



# Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

Graeme Fraser, President

May 30, 2023 Reporter: Don Butler

**This meeting was hybrid**

**Program: Jean Holbert-Leighton – Classification Talk**

**Meeting Video:** <https://youtu.be/AM-pUNdxnW8>

## **Hybrid meeting enablers**

Communication links and audiovisuals : **Brett Brooking**; Payments: **Dave Morton**; Attendance: **Mary Wattie** and **John Kersley** ; Meeting room set-up: various members.

**PDG Hadi Mortada**, filling in for **President Graeme**, who is away on holidays, welcomed us all to the 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of this Rotary year. He acknowledged that our Club meets on the unceded traditional land of the Anishinaabeg Algonquin people and that we deeply appreciate their connection with this place. 22 of us attended this meeting in person and 18 online.

**O Canada** was again the rock version performed by the DuBay Band.

**Acting President Hadi** presented **Roger Wilson** with his 36 year attendance pin. After welcoming again as our guest, Rotarian John Matthews from Iqaluit , **Hadi** reminded us that our speaker, **Jean Holbert-Leighton** had been with our Club since the fall but had been a Rotarian for 16 years before that.

**Jean** took the mic and told us that she had had two “wonderful professions-teaching and selling real estate” but would focus on her background info and teaching experiences

Her father’s family had centuries of history in North America and were United Empire Loyalists on both sides of the family. **Jean** was born in Belleville and grew up with three sisters on an area farm. She was adventurous and got into scrapes

with farm animals and vehicles with only minor bruises. After grade 13 she went to Teacher's College and taught in St Catharines from 1969 to July 2022. She had pupils from Europe, South America the Caribbean and for probably half of them English was a second language. She got to know the families and was invited to ethnic dances, weddings and family parties and became acquainted with a lot of ethnic foods. Years later **Jean's** car broke down in a rough neighbourhood and an Outlaw motorcycle gang member remembered her from grade three and help her get going again. Other memories included the deaths of two students in the Air India flight 182 bombing over Ireland and meeting, in a parent teacher interview, the father of one of her students who later became her husband. He asked her out and, as it was frowned upon in those days for teachers and parents to date, they went to Buffalo for a Sabres hockey game to be discreet. Alas, the 'kiss cam' made their date public. There was much good-humoured joshing and in due course they were married in 1981

**Jean** had gotten her BA in 1977 but continued her studies and got a Masters in 1988. During one period she worked on her Masters, mentored student teachers, had a new baby, a preteen and a teenager who needed drives to daycare and different schools and coached basketball, volleyball or soccer. Busy!

In the early 1990s a number of young girls were murdered including the victims of Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka and by 1993 St Catharines changed. You drove your kids to school, kids walked in pairs and the school doors were always locked.

But through **Jean's** story it is clear that she loved teaching and loved the kids and her life. It is a good story and you may wish to ask **Jean** for a copy as the above gives just a taste.

**Jean** retired from teaching in 2001 and took up real estate sales. She likes cars and her dogs and adores her two grandchildren. She enjoys travel and has visited many countries. She became a Rotarian because she enjoys helping people although she now has health limitations

**Gord Leverton commented** that he had also lived in St Catharines in the 90s and agreed that the Bernardo-Homolka murders had put a damper on the whole town.

**Ag. President Hadi** told **Jean** we had enjoyed learning about her and thanked her warmly

**Birthdays:** on behalf of the Club foundation **Jean Begin** extended June birthday greetings to **Nigel Lever, Stu Picozzi, Blair Armstrong, Doug Heyland, Bill McIntyre, Roger Wilson, Ginette Thomas, Ron Doll, Robert Eagle, Jen Soucy,** and **Peter Fisher**

### **Announcements**

-please answer **Marcia's** present-elect questionnaire.  
-register for District Changeover June 24. Not just **Pardeep Ahluwalia** becoming District Governor but **President Graeme** becoming DG Nominee.

<https://rotary7040.com/page/changeover>

-Club Changeover and Awards night June 27. Details to follow  
-Business Connect for Water 2 Million Liters Giveaway: our District 7040 had done very well in the competition.  
-the West Ottawa team, led by **Dave Morton**, had come first in the RC Stittsville Trivia Night May 26 and, as is the custom, had donated back its \$500 prize to Rotary Stittsville for its charitable work.

### **Happy Dollars**

-**Jean Begin** had enjoyed her 60<sup>th</sup> nursing school reunion in Bellville  
-**Dave Morton** had enjoyed Race Weekend with the course crew on Sunday and running the 2 K with his grandson on Saturday.  
-**Linda Flynn** had enjoyed taking a load of Storybook Ottawa books with **Larry Chop** to Regjna Street Alternative School. **Larry** had enjoyed taking bags of books to the different classes.  
- **Rocco Disipio** was happy about the birth of another grandson. He will also be named Rocco. Congrats **Rocco**  
- **Susan Diening** has room in her car for others going to the District Changeover. She also was pleased at her grandson's announcing that at the 2022 RYLA he had seen it was "OK to be me".

### **Meeting ends**

**Ag.President Hadi** told us about the June 6 meeting, urged us to wear Rotary pins or other identifiers, and bring someone to the meeting. Adjourned

## **Post meeting**

**Blair Armstrong** passed May 31. **Acting President Hadi** asked that this Spinoff include the sad news. See **Linda Flynn** emails June 1 and 2 for details.

## **Cash Calendar winners**

<https://www.ottawarotarycalendar.com/2023-winners.html>

### **Next Meeting**

**Hybrid**

**June 6, 2023**

“Doors open” 12:00. Meeting proper starts @ 12:30

Jeremy Klein: Living in New York during 9/11

Intro and thanks: **Jim Maxwell**

Spinoff: **Don Butler**

**In person:** St Anthony Banquet Hall

**Zoom at** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81365346181> Meeting ID: 813 6534 6181

See **Linda Flynn**'s email for log-in details