



Fellow Rotarians and guests, thank you. I am proud to stand before you as your 101st President. What an awesome thing to be able to say. And what an awesome time our Club has had in the past few months: our Gala, our Plaza, our Lectures, and the 40th edition of Art in the Park. Colleen, what a way to wrap up your year! We will celebrate it this Thursday evening.

I've been proud to work closely with Colleen for the past couple of years as we prepared for this Centennial Year. She has been a wonderful leader and Rotary friend. Thank you, Colleen. Friends, as is traditional, I'd like to tell you my Rotary Story. Then I'd like to talk about where we are today – and then wrap up with looking forward.



MY FAMILY

The most important people in my life...



I'd like to start by acknowledging the most important people in my life, most of whom who are here today: my amazing wife Allison (who as you know is also my business partner); our sophisticated and increasingly tall son Christopher, and my mother-in-law (and wine-drinking partner) Duffy Davidson.

I'd also like to acknowledge our younger son Duff (who's at camp right now) and my mother Edith (who many of you have met). Plus, thank you also to my friends who came to today's meeting, to see me installed. Many of them are future Rotarians. Not all of them know that yet!



MY ROTARY STORY

the sense of community...



Like many people, I joined Rotary for reasons that are different from why I stayed.

Back in 2008, Allison and I moved to Windsor from Toronto. It was a move back home for Allison. For me, it was a new home – but I knew it would be good, because I'd visited many times over the then-8 years since we'd married, and I'd always felt at home and welcome.

But I was a new person in a new town. I wanted to establish myself socially and professionally here and broaden my circle. So somebody – and I suspect it was Duffy – suggested I chat to

their close friend and neighbour, Bill Howitt. Apparently he was a member of one of the Rotary Clubs in Windsor. And I did. He sold me on this group of people. **Bill, please still stand up and be acknowledged.**

So... I joined the club, in (I think) October 2008. So I'm nearly at my 10-year anniversary.



It took a while for me to truly become a Rotarian. For a while, I was just somebody who had joined a Rotary Club. I came to meetings. Gary Katz recruited me to help him in the cash room at Art in the Park. Somebody else suggested I join the Finance Committee. After all, I am an accountant.

But two people caught my attention very quickly.

The reason is simple: the young man sitting down at the President's Table, there.

Let me make a long story short: In 2004, we were living in Toronto. Allison was here in Windsor visiting Duffy and Jack, her late father who was then in the terminal stages of cancer. While Allison was here in Windsor, Chris was delivered unexpectedly, 8 weeks early, at a weight of 3lbs 12oz.



He spent the first 5 weeks of his life – which coincided with the last weeks of Jack's life – in the NICU here in Windsor, while I was commuting to Toronto. He received amazing care. And he was under the care of an incredible physician: our very own Dr Godfrey.



Isn't that a great picture? Godfrey, I've never talked to you directly about this, but the care from you and your team made a huge difference in our lives. So thank you. When I found you were a member of this Club, it didn't affect my life immediately – but it did change how I felt about the people who I met here. And I paid attention to what I heard about what you were doing for your

home country. After all, I'm an immigrant to Canada too – although from a very different background.

And the second person who caught my attention was our own John McGivney.



**JOHN
MCGIVNEY**

It turned out that Chris – notwithstanding the amazing care he received under Godfrey and his colleagues – had some challenges arising from his early arrival. You’d never know it now.

But the first three years of his life – when we were still living in Toronto – had more difficulties than we might have anticipated. (And I must pay

respect to Allison, who saw this so much more clearly than I did.)

Chris received care from Bloorview Children’s Centre, in Toronto, which is where kids go who need special care. But... we never felt we really got the care he needed. Although his needs were genuine, we were always left feeling that there were many other kids who had more severe needs than we did – so we should just put up and shut up.



**JOHN
MCGIVNEY
CHILDREN'S
CENTRE**



Then we moved to Windsor. And Chris was very quickly referred to the John McGivney Children’s Centre. It’s not exaggerating to say that the care there made a huge difference to him and us.

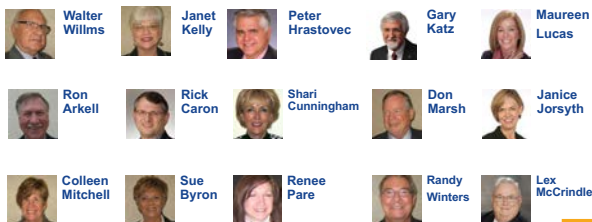
So... as you can imagine, the name “John McGivney” caught my attention. But then I realized that – although John the man was the driving force

– the centre that now bears his name was a project of this whole Club.

So... I started to look and listen more. And talk to people.

And... over the next few years, as I spent more time in this Club – and got to know my new community – I was inspired by more and more people I met here. Here are only a few examples

INSPIRING...



If your picture isn’t up here, please don’t be upset or offended: there was only room for 15 pictures. But if it is, you are one of the people who has inspired me over the past 10 years. To be a leader, to be a humanitarian, to be a Rotarian. I may not have actually mentioned this to you, but it’s true. If you’re surprised that your picture is here, I’d be glad to tell you – privately - the difference you

made to me.

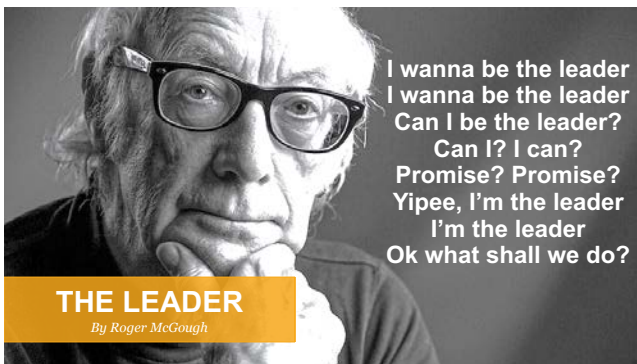
So.... I joined for one reason: to build a network. But I stayed for another reason: Because I was inspired to be a better person.

All of this feeds in beautifully to RI President Barry Rassin’s theme for this year: “Be the Inspiration”.



So.... it seems a very long time ago that I had a phone chat with then-immediate-PP Janet Kelly, who (as chair of the PP Committee) was tasked with finding the next future President. And the Club’s leadership wanted to nail this down early, as we had lots of planning to do for our Centennial year. So, I became our President Nominee Nominee Nominee...

Why did I put my name forward as President for this year? Well....



You may not recognize this – but about 20 years ago the London Underground did a great series of what they called “Poems on the Tube”. This was one of their most popular. It always stuck with me.... So....



Well, first I needed to learn about what we do. One of the President Nominee’s jobs is to prepare our Club’s applications for various awards. So.... I put together our application for the Dick Hedke award. I talked to leaders in our Club to find out what we do. It turned out to be quite a lot.



And then PP Colleen organized our first “Past Presidents’ Day” this January – which we will repeat next year – which was a truly awesome line of dedicated Rotarians.

And I must say this: it really put things into perspective for me. No matter how much I can help this Club achieve this year - or really screw up

– I am only one out of more than a hundred presidents of this Club. So I should be humble about it – but also not be scared of it.

Then I went to PETS (President Elect Training Seminar) in March – where I met my cohort of fellow Presidents from our district, all of whom are taking office right about now.

In case you didn’t already know this, we are the largest club in our district: we are the 500-lb gorilla.

And I want to tell you this – although you likely already know it:

- I am amazed at how much we do.
- We have a large and motivated membership.
- We have financial resources in our Foundation that allow us to do much that is important.
- We have amazing staff resources in our office: Brenda and Suzanne
- No or few other clubs in our districts do what we do.



Others are amazed at how much we do.

We have a large and motivated membership

We have financial resources in our Foundation that – although we must be good stewards – allow us to do much that is important.

We have amazing staff resources in our office:

Brenda and Suzanne. [And I have asked them to sit at the President’s Table for a reason: Without the work they do, 1918 wouldn’t do what it does. THANK YOU!]

I tell you: No or few other clubs in our districts do what we do.

WE ARE THE CLUB THAT OTHERS ASPIRE TO BE”.



AND YET...

There is so much more that we can do.

Some of it is simple and easy, and I will try to help us do that this year. For example, Legacy Chair Janet has undertaken an exercise to develop a proper database of former Youth Exchange rebounders, their families and our inbounder host families, RYLA graduates and so on.

Some of the most inspired Rotarians I've met at district events are people who were former host parents, who wanted to be hosts – but had never thought about joining Rotary until they were asked. Let me give you an example: One of our most inspiring newer Rotarians – Jesse Thompson – met us because his office is next door to mine. He's a former Youth Exchanger. Nobody had ever reached out to ask him if he would like to join. Now we can – and will – do that

And we have a list of SIMPLE things like this that I have asked your Board to help implement over the next 12m. None of them world-changing, but together – helpful.

And..... At PETS, I learned that

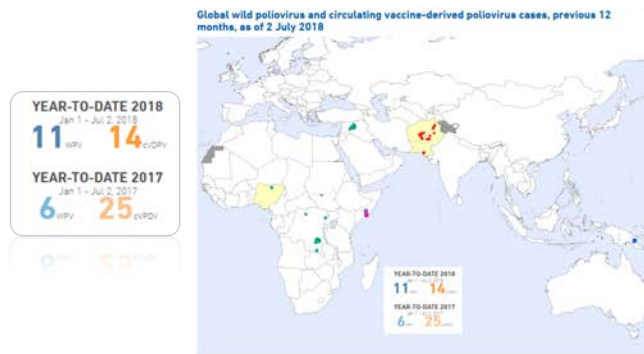


Rotary
Rotary Club of Windsor (1918)

The only limit on what we can do...is what we decide we're going to do.

One example: I was stunned to learn that PolioPlus – the global eradication of a terrible disease – was a bottom-up project. It didn't come from Evanston. It started because a small club of 35 members on a small island in the Philippines decided they wanted to get rid of polio on their island. So they started a project. They were successful. The project spread through their district. Then the country. Then their

Rotary Zone. Then RI looked at it and said, "Wow".



13 [get updated from

<http://polioeradication.org/polio-today/polio-now/>]



[Pause]

OK.... So you drink the koolaid when you go to PETS and district conference and things like that. But regular life still goes on, and that's what we live with day-to-day – and where we make a difference.

As every President does, I'll change up a few small things. But don't worry, I'm not going to blow up what has worked so well for us in the past. We will still have weekly meetings. I'm still going to try to get us out by 1.10pm.

WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO?



Quality speakers

Make a difference in our community – and celebrate others who do

Continue our own fine traditions and programs



- We will still have **Quality Speakers** on a wide range of topics

- We will still **Make a difference in our community – and celebrate others who do**

- We will still **Continue our own fine traditions and programs**: Valentine's Day Auction, Club awards, presentations on our amazing committees – and of course we will host AIP and CF....

And we will still sing!

And here are some new things we can look forward to this year:

LOOKING FORWARD



July 18, 2018 – Opening of the Chimczuk Museum Rotary Exhibit

July 28, 2018 – Plunge for Polio

August 25 & 26, 2018 – Beach Bash Volleyball Tournament

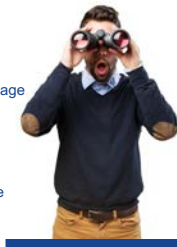
October 22, 2018 – Tree planting at Maryvale, JMCC and Safety Village

December 17th, 2018 – Centennial Wrap-up

January 2019 – Our 2nd Century

April 2019 – Windsor/Essex combined meeting: Gordie Howe Bridge

May 10 to 12, 2019 – District Conference at Caesars Windsor



- **July 18, 2018 – Opening of the Chimczuk Museum Rotary Exhibit** Particular thanks to our amazing Archivist Megan, who's the driving force behind it.

- **July 28, 2018 – Plunge for Polio** – I had to check my life insurance policy first. On July 28, 15 Rotarians from 6400 – including PDG

Rick and myself – will plunge out of a plane from 14,000 feet to raise money for Polio. We won't ask you to jump – but we might ask you to pledge for the plunge!

- **August 24-25 2018 – Beach Bash Volleyball Tournament.** Led by Rotarian Neil McTavish, this will be what we hope to be the first edition of what will become our next annual fundraiser.
- **October 22, 2018 – Tree planting at Maryvale, JMCC and Safety Village**
- **December 17, 2018 – Centennial Wrapup** – the final event of our incredible Centennial, led by PP Maureen Lucas and her wonderful committee
- **Jan 2019 – Our 2nd Century** (more in a minute)
- **April 2019 – Windsor/Essex combined meeting: Gordie Howe Bridge**

- **May 10-12, 2019 – District Conference at Caesars Windsor** – For the first time in many years, our District Conference is being held in our own District – and more to the point, it’s being held here in Windsor. We and the other Windsor/Essex Clubs are engaged in a discussion with our District Governor how we can welcome 500 Rotarians from across our district to our home town (mostly American, I might add) – and use this as an opportunity to nail home the message to our community from our centennial year, that we make a difference. Stay tuned, we’ll keep you posted.



Who went to Mackinaw - Did you come away feeling inspired? Wouldn't it be great if everyone in our Club could feel that way about Rotary? OK, not necessarily all the time.... but at least for a while?

But of course that's not how life is. And let's be honest – some of our members aren't particularly inspired or engaged. [However, if

you're in this room today, that's probably not you.]

Here are two numbers that caught my attention at PETS:



Rotary Membership for approx. last 10 years:

1.2 million

Number of people who have joined Rotary in the last 10 years:

1.2 million

Rotary membership for approx. last 10 years: 1.2m

Number of people who have joined Rotary in the last 10 years: 1.2m

ENGAGED PEOPLE DON'T LEAVE OUR CLUB!

That's interesting - we're always taking about recruiting new members. But we don't have a recruitment challenge, we have a retention

challenge. And anybody in business will tell you that it's much harder to gain a brand-new customer, than it is to increase the interaction with an existing one. Rotary's no different.

Over the past couple of years, I've talked with many of our fellow 1918 Rotarians to try and find out why this might be the case. It's not that we lose people to the "competition" – Kiwanis, Goodfellows and all the other service organizations. It's the other commitments in life that are our competition.

In business terms. I'd put it this way: what's our value proposition. But it basically boils down to this:

Does Rotary – and Windsor 1918 offer enough that makes it worth my time, effort and membership dues?



If not, why not? And what can we do to change that?

So.... you're not going to hear much from me on "Bring in new members". Although obviously we'd welcome as many as we can find!

What I'd LIKE you to hear is "*Here's the amazing value that Rotary offers in our lives. Could I use*

more of that?

....AND can I think of anybody I'd like to share that with?"

Look at the wave of inspiring new members who joined us in April, having seen our amazing centennial kick off year – and that unbelievable video. That's what I'm talking about.

Everybody's position in life and Rotary is different:

- You may be a young professional relatively early on – with less financial stability.
- Or you may be at "peak busyness" – young business and a young family. Guilty as charged.
- Or at that stage – as many of our most active Rotarians are – where you have more time and perhaps slightly more stable financial situation.
- OR you are now what I've heard described as a "knife and fork Rotarian" – you have served the Club and our projects honorably for many years – and now its best value to you is the fellowship with friends you have given service with for many years.

Whichever you are: THANK YOU. You are appreciated as you are. But please reflect on this:



Why did you become a member?

Why do you remain a member?

I've told you my story – I came for fellowship and networking, and I stayed for the service.

Allan Kidd told me he joined because he wanted to be part of the group that made Art in the Park such a wonderful event each year.

Sue Byron told me that she joined because Walter asked her to – but then she stayed because she found so much joy in the work in our community: the Safety Village, the Salvation Army.

Ed Boycott told me he joined because Hy Muroff asked him (3 times) but stayed because he and Rose loved hosting youth exchange students and helping arrange it all. They've hosted 7 students, and both been honoured with COG awards.

Renee Pare told me she joined because Bill McArthur invited her to a meeting – and she was hooked as soon as we started singing! But she stayed because she loves everything we do in our community. In less time than I've been here, she's chaired Art in the Park, served on the Board, and is now Youth Exchange Chair. Wow!

Notice a theme here? It's the service, every time.

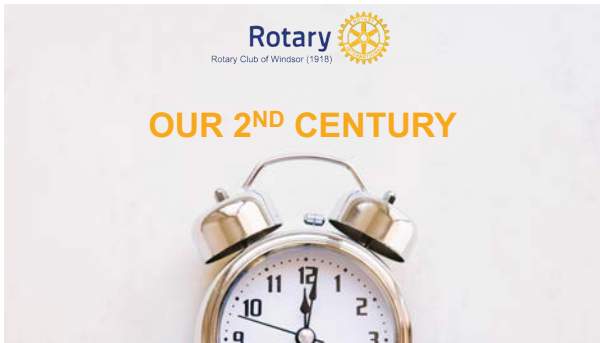
And, if you're reflecting on that, I'd ask you to take it a little further:



- If I got involved because I was excited by what we do, is there anything else Rotary does that might excite me? Can I try it? **Can I “grow my Rotary”?** Either to do something new – or re-engage in an area where I can offer my experience? It doesn't need to be a big time commitment – just a small amount of effort.

- There are so many experiences that Rotary offers that are valuable lessons for young people. **Can I expose my kids, grandchildren or young neighbours to this?** For example: Chris and Duff have both done the kettlebells at the Mall at Xmas. Then last month Duff came with me to serve at the Salvation Army Community Meal. True, I had to drag him to both of them – but there were a lot of good questions and discussions coming out afterwards. Here's the key thing: It doesn't take much. Serving the meal was just two hours one evening. It's like dragging yourself off the couch to go to the gym – but SO MUCH MORE REWARDING!
- If you are a 40+ year member – and Rotary's main value to you is now in its fellowship – THANK YOU. But there are people in your life who you inspire – and who inspire you. Without asking you to leave, Can I spread the Rotary message to others I know? What a gift to give to somebody you care for – to introduce them to the joy of serving others.

AND: Then of course, there's:



So... I'll be honest about this. I was really worried about Monday January 7, 2019. I'd be up here, starting our first meeting of 2019. Talk about a hangover. It's not just the usual post-holiday letdown after Xmas and New Year. We'd also be in the post-party slump after our amazing Centenary year – and I'd hear crickets.

But we are in a unique position. We have just completed our first century of service. We have a large number of motivated Rotarians, amazing connections throughout the world, a stable financial position at our Foundation – and an endless list of ways we can make a difference.

So I get the best possible job: I get to ask YOU:

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN OUR SECOND CENTURY?

Please start to think about this.

Join leaders, exchange ideas, take action?



When my long-further successor – our 201st president – stands here – what should he or she be able to celebrate?

The rest of 2018 is still the celebration of our centennial year – our first century. But in the tail end of it – as our celebration winds down – we will start the ball rolling on this thought process. I

CHALLENGE YOU:



We will have meetings to provide the opportunity to think about these things and discuss them. Then in the new year – in early 2019 – we will really go to work on this.

Obviously I have my thoughts and my dreams – but I'm only one of [TODAY - 132] of us. This is your club. I am here for one year to help direct us and decide

where we want to go. It is going to be the best and most exciting year of my life. I'm not scared, because I know we have an amazing group of people here. AND... it will drive that value conversation: What value does Rotary have in my life? And who else would I like to share that?

So back to President Barry's theme: Be the inspiration.



TO CONCLUDE:

We all have lives outside Rotary. But we have achieved huge things. We have so much more we can do. And it doesn't have to cost us that much time, effort or money – we just have to decide we want to do it.

This Club inspires me. Others have told me it inspires many others in our district. I hope it inspires you. Let's go out and inspire our community and have an amazing year. Thank you.