

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon

President: Brenda Jenkins  
Secretary: Libby Nelson  
Editor: Peter Boekhorst

Phone: 604-816-6961  
Phone: 604-868-4674  
Phone: 604-462-0377

[E-mail the President](#)  
[E-mail the Secretary](#)  
[E-mail the Editor](#)



**OCTOBER IS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT MONTH**

**Happy Birthday**

**Happy Anniversary**

**UPCOMING SPEAKERS:**

Oct. 17: Induction of Zain Kathrada	Oct. 24: Sharon Kyle Rotary Exchange Students	Oct 31: David Lukov District Governor's Visit
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**LAST WEEK'S MEETING**

President **Brenda** presided.

Guests:

**Raj Talasi** (soon to be inducted as one of our newest members)

Program:

An Invitation to Support Education and Literacy in Belize



Presenters:

**Al Stjernegaard**, past president of the Port Moody Rotary Club 2012/2013, and the past Assistant Governor 2019/2022.

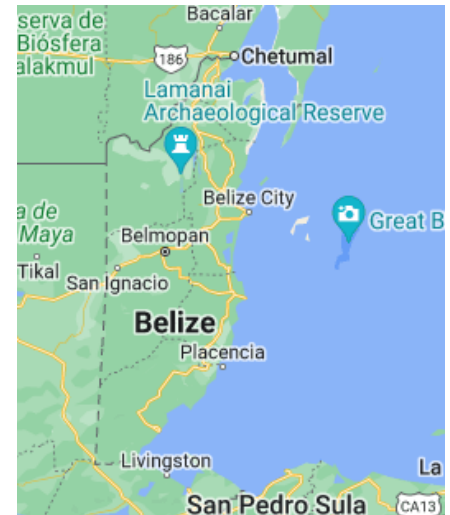
**Brian Wormald** is past Director of Environmental Services of the Port Moody Rotary Club, and who is active in his community with numerous environment engagement groups (and he has a passion for older cars, especially Pontiac). Brian is originally from Australia, and moved to Vancouver in 2006. He has been a volunteer for most of his youth and adult life in various capacities for a wide range of organizations – in several countries.



Both Al and Brian (together with Glen Brown) spoke to us on April 11, 2023 about the Port Moody Club's international project in Belize, that started in 2018, and involved the Belize Central Prison which is run by the Belize Rotary Club. Today, they told us about, and invited us to support, a follow-up education and literacy project in Belize.

**Background:**

Belize is a small economically challenged country in Central America.



50% of Belize children live in poverty, facing substantial barriers to education. Education is technically free, but many costs are left for families to pay themselves, placing a huge burden on the poor. For every dollar spent by the government on schools, Belizean families spend another 90 cents. Only 45% of children attend secondary school at all. To make things even more difficult, two years of education were lost to Covid when schools were closed. Belize was impacted more than any other Caribbean country. Attempts were made to provide students with home and study alternatives, but many lack the family and financial supports to continue learning during that period. The result is that historical challenges accessing basic education and literacy have increased significantly.

### Where Rotary has Succeeded:

During the Covid epidemic, the Rotary club of Belize City and the Port Moody Club obtained a Rotary Global Grant. This funded the purchase and installation of computer labs for the prison in Belize utilizing the RACHEL device. RACHEL stands for Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning, and is a portable, battery-powered device that contains copies of educational websites in off-line format that can deliver digital educational content to laptops. (See the April 18, 2023 edition of our Four-Way Flasher newsletter for details of that international project.)

In September 2022 when students return to school following Covid, school-wide testing of reading levels was conducted in Belize, and testing confirmed a dramatic underperformance of student literacy relative to expected grade levels. In the spring of 2023, a RACHEL lab was established in a learning resource centre accommodating up to 15 students at a time, which enabled the school to target literacy and educational support to at-risk groups and to students with individualized learning needs. This allowed the centre to allocate limited resources to areas where the needs are most acute.

### What We / They Planned to Do

The plan of the Port Moody/Belize Rotary project is to strengthen the basic education and literacy needs in Belize – to address the literacy gap arising from Covid's lost years of education, and address the historically high dropout rate by providing more students with access to technology. They can do this by providing RACHEL-based learning labs to schools lacking critical learning resources. A learning lab that each school would get includes a RACHEL server, 20 Chromebooks, headphones, a large monitor (TV screen) and a secure lock box storage unit/cart.

### How our Maple Ridge Rotary Club Can Help

They expect to invest \$8,000 USD in each school to provide the technology, along with training and implementation support. Their fundraising target is \$80,000 USD which will provide learning labs to 10 schools. Funds will be raised to qualify for the Rotary Global Grant. The goal, working with the Rotary Club of Belize, is to match club contributions with district funds, and then augment the grant budget with a contribution from the World Fund (at 80% of district funds).

What this means is that \$3,500 USD raised at the club level can provide an \$8,000 USD computer lab, support and training to an impoverished school in Belize. We are invited to join in this exciting international project where all of the investigation and work has been done.

For only \$3,500 USD we can sponsor/adopt a school, or join with other clubs to support this project.

We can also travel with other Rotarians to Belize on a 7 – 10 day trip which is being planned for April or May, 2024.

To learn more about the project and/or the trip, we can contact Al Stjernegaard at [alstjerne@mail.com](mailto:alstjerne@mail.com) 604-418-2525, [www.portmoodyrotary.ca](http://www.portmoodyrotary.ca).

Happy and Sad Dollars included:

**Lynda Lawrence** is off to Hawaii.

**Mark Vosper's** 83-year-old mother came over from England for a visit. Although this is her fifth trip to Canada, she has never previously been able to see a wild bear, even though Mark has taken her to various remote places where bear sightings in the wild are not uncommon. This time, however, the bear came to see mother - they spotted a bear by a river not far from Mark's home.



**Al Stjernegaard** contributed \$20 happy dollars towards our Paul Harris fund.

President **Brenda** enjoyed one of the quietest Thanksgivings in a long time, while her son (who is in Mexico) had a more exciting time in so far as his flight home was cancelled because of a hurricane in that vicinity.

**Leslie** was sad because of all the hatred that seems to be in the world these days (as shown in the recent Hamas – Israel war that was precipitated when on October 7, 2023 Hamas militants invaded Israel from the Gaza Strip killing about 200 people and taking men, women and children as hostages back to Gaza).

**Ineke** is enthused about sponsoring a school in Belize, which will cost our club only \$3,500 USD.

She also had a great Thanksgiving (and in lieu of a turkey, saved a lot of work by buying a pre-roasted chicken, for which some anonymous Tom was no doubt very grateful that he still has his long neck to gobble with).



Fine Master Leslie raised a bit of cash with the questions:

When is Columbus Day celebrated as a national holiday in the USA? Answer, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in October (this year October 9).

What time is it on the Doomsday Clock? Answer, 90 seconds to midnight.



[FYI, *The Doomsday Clock* is a symbol that represents the likelihood of a human-made global catastrophe, in the opinion of the members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Maintained since 1947, the clock is a metaphor for threats to humanity from unchecked scientific and technological advances.]

Leslie also told us about the chicken farmer whose apparently free-range chickens kept getting run over by speeding drivers on a road that intersected his property until that is, he put up a sign



that said:

#### Club Announcements/Business

October 24 is **World Polio Day** – watch for our ad in the local News (that was paid for by some members of our club and published at a reduced rate by the Newspaper).

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual **Salvation Army Dignity Breakfast** is coming up on Wednesday November 22 at the Sky Helicopter Hanger in Pitt Meadows, 7:30 am – 9:00 am, and our club will support the event by buying a table for 8 attendees. Let Mike Davies know if you wish to attend.

Our club will again this year support the **Seniors Christmas Lunch** that will be held on December 13 at 1:00 PM at the Alliance church, by purchasing the food (turkey, carrots, potatoes, cranberry sauce, etc. - at a cost of approximately \$2,000) and by helping with the peeling potatoes and carrots at the Salvation Army kitchen.

Consider supporting the **Hospice Society's Oktoberfest** that will be held on October 20, at the Albion Community Centre.

And last but not least, be sure to attend our club's noon meeting on Tuesday Oct 31 for the **Official Visit by our District Governor David Lukov.**

#### Today's Quote:



**Submitted by Laurie Anderson**

#### CLUB CALENDAR:

Oct 20 - **Oktoberfest Hospice**

Oct 24 - **End Polio Day**

Oct 31 - **David Lukov - District Governor's Visit**

Nov 18 - **Foundation Dinner** - Bellingham Golf & Country Club

Nov 23 - **Dancing in the Ridge competition**

Dec 2 - **Pre-PETS** - Silver Reef Casino Resort

Jan 27, 2024 - **Grants Management Seminar**  
Rotary Fieldhouse, South Surrey

Mar 2, 2024 - **Grants Management Seminar**  
Silver Reef Casino Resort

Apr 13, 2024 - **District Assembly** - Kwantlen Polytechnic  
Langley Campus - new location!