



Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon

President: Laurie Anderson
Secretary: Ineke Boekhorst
Editor: Peter Boekhorst

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

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



APRIL IS ENVIRONMENTAL MONTH

Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

Upcoming Speakers:

Apr 15: Ineke Boekhorst
Belize Report

Apr 22: Ruth Lee
Pathfinders Youth Society

Apr 29:

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Laurie Anderson** presided.

Guests:

Cathy Henderson

Danica Pope (daughter of Alex)

Andy and Yvonne Berrisford

Peyton Callison (daughter of Clint)

Program – Laurie Anderson – History of Women in Rotary

The Rotary Club of Meadow Ridge was chartered on March 3, 1990, 35 years ago, with 5 women as charter members and 3 women (including Ineke Boekhorst) joining shortly thereafter. It is hard to believe that it was only about 16 months before that date when the Rotary International Board of Directors issued a policy statement recognizing the right of Rotary clubs in Canada to admit female members into Rotary.

The first Rotary club was formed in Chicago Illinois in 1905. The first constitution for Club # 1 (the Chicago club) adopted in Jan 1906 makes no mention of gender. It refers only to "persons". But it was implied to mean "men". Everyone knew that "persons" meant "men"! After all, it wasn't until 1920 in the United States that women were even given the right to vote (although Canadian women got the right to vote in 1918). Women's rights progressed slowly.

(It wasn't until 1964 that women in Canada gained the right to open a bank account, without requiring their husband's signature.)

However, there had been several, very early attempts to admit women into Rotary. The first official attempt was at the Rotary International Convention in 1910. Some delegates introduced the topic, but it was overwhelmingly rejected.

The LOS ANGELES HERALD newspaper of August 18, 1910 had this to say about the decision: **"Because the average man cannot manage the average woman, the members of the Rotary Clubs of America barred women from their organization."**

In 1912, a Rotary club in Belfast, Ireland, discussed the advisability of women joining and/or attending weekly luncheons. However, it was rejected, and there were also other attempts.

By 1921 Rotary had had enough of this 'nonsense' about women joining Rotary, so the 1921 International Convention, in Scotland, produced the Standard Club Constitution; and in it the terminology was changed to state: "A Rotary club shall be comprised of men." But it also permitted, at that time, the formation of a separate "Ladies Auxiliary". (I guess they were using their own version of "separate, but equal"). Several subsequent international conventions, specifically in 1950 (India) and 1964 (Sri Lanka), considered deleting the word "male" from the Constitution. But, again, they were withdrawn or defeated.

Several other efforts were made during the late 60's and early 70's. This was coincidental with the rise of the women's movement and the fact that women were reaching higher levels in their professions. (I entered law school in 1965, and out of a class of about 103 law students in BC, there were only 2 or 3 women. Now the number of women on law school often outnumbers the men).

Who says that a small club can't create great changes? In 1976, the small town of Duarte, California, had a very small Rotary Club (even today, the town has only about 22,000 citizens). Although the club had been chartered almost 25 years earlier, it had only 8 members in 1976, and they wanted to increase the size of the club. So, they voted to invite three women into the club. Two of them, both school principals, joined immediately. The third joined a few months later. This move represented a dramatic 37.5 % increase in membership. Initially, the club wanted to keep this bold move under the radar.

So, when they registered the women with RI, these new members were listed using only their first initials. However, a few months later, in celebration of the Club's 25th anniversary, they were re-introduced using their full complete names.

As you might expect, word spread; and a few months later (in Feb. 1978) RI got wind of this, and revoked their charter. After refusing to remove the new members, this club changed its name to the "Ex Rotary Club of Duarte" – and existed without a charter.

A series of legal actions then began. The club initially filed a law suit protesting the revocation of the charter. In 1983 the **California Superior Court** ruled in favour of R.I. and upheld gender-based discrimination. But the **California Court of Appeal** reversed the decision that same year, and ruled that the Duarte Rotary Club was, in fact, a business establishment and that it came under the auspices of the Civil Rights Act which outlawed business discrimination, in California. R.I. appealed this decision to the **California Supreme Court**, but it refused to hear the case. It was then appealed to the US Supreme Court. (It seems, R.I. was very intent on keeping women out.) The **US Supreme Court** made their decision on May 4 1987. It ruled that Rotary clubs may not exclude women from membership on the basis of their gender. (This was a 7-0 decision. Two judges recused themselves. Harry Blackmun was an Honorary Rotarian and Sandra Day O'Connor's spouse was a Rotarian.)

The court decision continued to be a major news event throughout the country and was an important Civil Rights decision that would open the doors to women, not only in Rotary, but also other "male only" clubs such as Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, Optimist International, and the American Legion. In 2022, 34% of the 223,263 Rotarians in the USA & Canada were women. There is still much resistance in many Asian districts. Japan, for example has only 4% women members.

Jennifer E. Jones, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, was Rotary International's first female president (in 2022-23), a groundbreaking selection that made her the first woman to hold that office in the organization's 115-year history. And, of course, our RI President this year is **Stephanie Urchick**.

Our Meadow Ridge Rotary Club now has about 30 members of whom 10 are women (33%). Of those 10, nine of them are very active (90%). We have 20 male members. 10 of the 20 male members are very active (50%). Conclusion? We need to concentrate on getting more women into our club! Why? To rephrase the note in the LOS ANGELES HERALD newspaper quoted above, **"Because the average man could not manage without the average woman being part of our organization."**

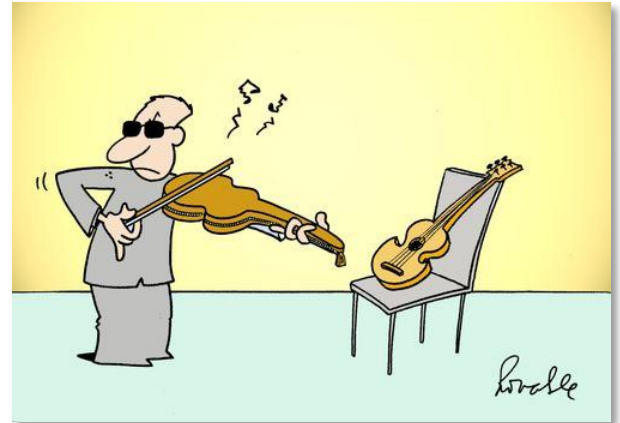
Club Announcements:

May 14 – Winefest: this is our major fundraiser.

Please sell some tickets. Only \$50 for a great evening. Only about 4 weeks to go. Every member is expected to buy a ticket, and to donate one bottle of wine or \$20 in lieu thereof. We are also looking for silent auction items!

Happy and Sad Dollars

Matt Debruyn (thanks to his wife Lynda urging him on) is finally getting his cataracts attended to. Soon he will be able to read music again (but if he misses a note on the violin, he will no longer be able to blame it on his eye sight).



Lynda Lawrence is happy - we now have the WineFest tickets for sale again. (Now let's get them sold!)

Sharon Kyle is happy she went to the District Assembly (with Claire and Alex).

Dave Rempel gave a sad dollar because he was unable to attend today's meeting.

Ken Holland has been through quite an "adventure" in dealing not only with his serious health problems (resulting directly from his Rotary International trip) but also coping with the BC medical system since his return. (He wrote a book about it called 'Morphine and Champagne' that is available on Amazon for anyone that is interested).

Overheard:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson