

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon



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APRIL IS ENVIRONMENTAL MONTH

Happy Birthday	Happy Anniversary
	Apr. 14 Dave & Sharon Rempel

Upcoming Speakers:

Apr. 14 Dr. Anshu Chandra Haiti Global Eye Project	Apr. 21 Kirsten Munk Beavers in BC	Apr. 28 Claire Viktora and team Trip to Ecuador
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RI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Not long ago, in a small health center in the village of Aaye in southwest Nigeria, a woman arrived in labor carrying twins. The facility was short-staffed. The nurse midwife in charge was not present.

A community health worker stepped forward. She had participated in Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a Rotary Foundation Programs of Scale initiative.

And though she was not formally trained as a midwife, she was equipped with essential emergency obstetric skills.

Hours later, both babies had been delivered, one at the health center and the other at a general hospital, where the mother had been referred after complications were quickly identified. The newborns and their mother were alive and safe.

Women around the world face similar circumstances every day — moments when the difference between life and loss depends on well-trained medical staff and reliable systems and procedures.

Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria exists to increase the chances that those moments end in hope. By strengthening health systems and training frontline workers, this program helps communities protect mothers and children even when circumstances are difficult.

This work reflects the very heart of Rotary service. Service is not only what we do when conditions are ideal. It is what we do when systems are strained, resources are limited, and the need is urgent. It is the commitment to prepare people before a crisis arrives and to stand with communities when it does.

Maternal and child health is not an abstract goal. It is deeply personal. It is a mother who survives childbirth. It is a newborn



who takes a first breath. It is a family that remains whole because someone was trained, ready, and cared enough to act. Rotary understands that service means investing in people and systems long before they are tested.

Programs like Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria show what is possible when Rotary brings together local knowledge, global partnerships, and sustainable solutions. By working alongside health professionals and local leaders, Rotary helps ensure that lifesaving care does not depend on luck or location.

The story of the mother and her twins is at its core a story of service. It is a reminder that Rotary's impact is measured in human moments when people step forward to help others in their most vulnerable hours.

When we *Unite for Good*, service becomes more than an ideal. It becomes a lifeline for families, a source of strength for communities, and a promise that Rotary will continue to go wherever help is needed most.

Francesco Arezzo
President 2025-26

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Alex Pope** Presided.

Guests:

Warren Dale

About Our Speaker Brian Lott

Brian Lott was born in England, and served approximately 4.5 years in the British Navy. He later immigrated to British Columbia, where he built a successful career in the hospitality industry. He owned and operated several establishments on Vancouver



Island, including the Waverly Hotel (Cumberland), the Whistlestop Pub (Courtenay), and was a partner in hotels in Courtenay and Comox. He relocated to South Africa in 1981, where he expanded his business interests significantly. He built a major catering company employing up to 870 staff at its peak, becoming one of the largest in the region. It is here that he met **Nelson Mandela** when he catered for various political and other events that Mandela attended. Mandela was, of course, first president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first Black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election.

Brian's presentation about Nelson Mandela

Close Encounter of the First Kind

In 1981 in South Africa, Brian described his first exposure to apartheid, recalling segregation in public spaces (streets, transport, shops), the cultural shock of witnessing systemic racial division, and the tense political climate leading up to the early 1990s. The central focus of the presentation was the speaker's professional and personal experiences with Nelson Mandela ("Madiba").

[Madiba is the name of the Thembu clan to which Mr. Mandela belonged. It gets its name from a 19th century chief. All the members of this clan can be called Madiba. Mr Mandela was called "Madiba" as a sign of both respect and affection.]

Brian's first encounter with Mandela was when he attended a major public rally shortly after Mandela's release from prison. He described the rally as a highly volatile atmosphere, with many in the crowd prepared for violence. But Mandela's message of peace and reconciliation defused tensions and deeply impacted our speaker.

Professional Relationship

Brian began providing catering services for Mandela and African National Congress (ANC) events when many others refused. The ANC originated as a liberation movement known for its opposition to apartheid. Brian's willingness to support Mandela led to a long-term professional relationship (approx. 10 years). A major highlight was organizing catering for Mandela's 1994 presidential inauguration. The scale, complexity, and success of the event were noted. There were in attendance approximately 11,600 guests, which included heads of state, royalty, and global dignitaries. The inauguration attracted the international media and cultural performers. The event logistics involved multiple large tent installations, five different menus, and a 7-course meal for VIP guests. 3.5 tons of meat and about 2.7 tons of vegetables were served. This was funded largely through international contributions, not taxpayers.



1995 Rugby World Cup & "Invictus", and Personal Anecdotes & Character of Mandela

Brian spoke about the impact of the 1995 Rugby World Cup. He recommended that those persons who missed it should watch the film *Invictus* (directed by Clint Eastwood), which he said is an excellent portrayal of Mandela (played by Morgan Freeman). Brian also spoke about Mandela's role in uniting the country through sport, and he shared several personal stories illustrating Mandela's character, including:

- Humility, as when he declined unnecessary ceremonial treatment (e.g., red carpet), and referred to himself as a "simple man".
- Selflessness, as when he declined medical treatment for himself, stating others had greater need.
- Hospitality & Etiquette, as when he never left events before all guests had departed; and favoured simple foods such as Rooibos ("red bush") tea, madeira cake, light meals.
- 'Madiba' spoke multiple languages, and demonstrated calm authority and deep moral conviction.

Brian's relationship with Mandela resulted in notable encounters and interactions with global figures including Desmond Tutu, George H. W. Bush, and Richard Branson, as well as participation in international events, including Mandela's visit to Canada.

Mandela's Legacy

Brian highlighted several well-known themes from Mandela's life:

- Importance of education
- Courage and perseverance
- Reconciliation over revenge
- Global humanitarian impact

He emphasized Mandela's enduring legacy as a symbol of peace, humility, and leadership.

In conclusion, Brian Lott expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share his experiences, and indicated willingness to return as a speaker for a "Part 2" of his presentation.

Club Business

April 10 - Wine Festival Zoom meeting at 10:30 AM

April 23 - Duck Race Resume meeting at 4 PM

April 24 - Rotary planning meeting for next year Rotary year at Eric's home

April 25 - Maple Ridge Community Foundation Citizen of the Year fundraising dinner

May 1-3 - Rotary District Conference at Harrison Hot Springs Resort

Happy and Sad Dollars

Laurie Anderson asked, "Did you know that today, April 7, 2026, is "International Be Kind to Lawyers Day"? According to Google, you can "observe this day by Being Patient: Understand that legal processes can be stressful and complex, and Acknowledge Their Work: recognize the high-stakes pressure they often work under". So, here's hoping for a non-stressful, non-high pressure day to our President-Elect **Eric** and our Director of Club Services **Adrienne**.



Yvonne Berrisford (who arranged for our guest speaker Brian Lott) was happy he was able to talk to us today, but sad that her son Byron (who passed away several years ago) would have turned 30 years old on this date.

For all you cooks out there, **Ineke Boekhorst** was happy to share this Recipe of a Rotarian:

THE RECIPE OF A ROTARIAN!



1 measure of good thought.
1 measure of consideration.
1½ measures of forgiveness.
1½ measures of well-beaten faults.
2 measures of sympathy.
2½ measures of sacrifice.
2 measures of kind deeds.
Mix thoroughly. Stir in kind words for taste, and flavor with charity. Pour into all your daily life, and bake well with the heat of human kindness.

Rotary  **PEOPLE OF ACTION**

Presidents Closing Quote:

**MY WIFE SAYS
I ONLY HAVE
TWO FAULTS
I DON'T LISTEN AND
SOMETHING ELSE**

Submitted by Laurie Anderson