Rotary Club of Meadow Ridge

# The Four Way Flasher

ROTARY CLUB MEADOW-RIDGE BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA

**Vol. 33, Issue 9 Sep 1, 2026**

Website: MeadowRidgeRotary.ca

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon

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|---|---|---|---|
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CREATE LASTING IMPACT

## SEPTEMBER IS BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY MONTH

| Happy Birthday | Happy Anniversary |
|---|---|
| Sep 3 Dave Rampel | Sep 2 Debbie & Fraser MacRae |

## Upcoming Speakers:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sep 1 Mo Korchinski<br>ED Unlocking the Gates Services | Sep 8 | Sep 15 Brenda Jenkins<br>My Grandfather's Story |

## RI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rotary has always been about people. Not projects. Not numbers. People.

Our goal of reaching 1.25 million Rotarians and 125,000 Rotaractors by our 125th anniversary in 2030 is also about people.

I bring up this goal again not because I expect the number itself to move you. Numbers rarely do. I bring it up because I worry that a goal this large can begin to feel abstract, distant from the everyday work of our clubs. I do not want that to happen. So let us talk, once more, about what is truly behind it.

I want to offer your club a simple exercise. Look back over the last five to seven years and find your best year. Maybe it was a year new members arrived and, more meaningfully, stayed. Maybe it was a year your meetings became something members looked forward to, rather than another obligation on a crowded calendar. Find that year. Then I ask you to do better than your best.

This is not a call to outpace the club across town or the district next door. It is never meant to be a competition between Rotary members. It is, instead, an invitation to hold ourselves to our own highest standard — and to rise to meet it again.

Why does this 2030 membership goal matter enough to me that I keep returning to it? Because behind every one of those numbers is a person whose life could be changed by this organization, just as mine and yours have been changed by it. Rotary has given me friendships that have lasted decades, a sense of purpose I did not know I was searching for, and something that, in time, came to feel like an extension of my family. I suspect many of you under stand this in your own lives, in your own way.

That life-changing experience is what we offer when we invite someone to join us. There are people in your communities right now who would find real meaning here if only someone thought to ask them. So tell them your story. Tell them honestly how Rotary changed you, not just about the projects you led or the funds you raised but about the person you became along the way. Those stories have a way of reaching people when little else does.

If we hope to *Create Lasting Impact*, the kind that resounds for generations, we will need more people standing beside us to help carry our work forward. Let us come together, not only this month but every month of every year, to make Rotary stronger, more joyful, and more like the family it has always been to me.

Find your best year. Then let us be better than our best, together.

**OLAYINKA H. BABALOLA**
**PRESIDENT 2026-27**

## LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Eric Mollema** presided.

Program: Gordon Robson's Who's Who

Note: Although this is Gordon's Who's Who, after Mary married Gordon, she was heavily involved in most of Gordon's activities as described in this presentation.

**The Early years and the 50's**

Gordy was born, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. His birth was witnessed by Nurse Katherine (Kitt) Robson who not only delivered him, but also (with her husband Lester Robson) kept him. The register of his birth shows that he came into this world in December 1945. Yes, young Gordy was alive and kicking. When he was between 5 years to 8 years old, Legg-Perthes disease tried to slow him down, during which time he had to wear leg braces and use crutches; but he recovered

and went on to play baseball. He soon became known to succeed in anything he chose to put his hand to.

**The 60's**

Garibaldi secondary school (GSS) opened in 1959/1960, and Gordy was the VP of the student council. He was involved in choosing the school's sports identity (the "Rebels") as well as the school's colors. In 1961 he set pins at the local bowling alley. A major turning point came when a travelling carnival arrived in Maple Ridge, and Gordy obtained employment with it, and quickly discovered that he enjoyed the business. When the carnival moved on to Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon, Gordy (at approximately 16 years of age and without his parents' approval) decided to miss school and travel with it. He came back several weeks later with $400 in his pocket (significant money in those days all) and returned to school. This experience became the beginning of a remarkable career in travelling entertainment, concessions and business management.

**The USA**

Gordon travelled to the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, which exposed him to different countries, cultures, restaurants and business opportunities. He subsequently got a job with a company that that operated the "SKY Diver ride". [The SKY Diver ride is often described as "a Ferris wheel turned extreme". It featured a 60-foot-tall main wheel that rotates vertically, and featured 16 two-person cars that are mounted on a barrel-roll axis, so that riders can make their car flip upside down, causing wild barrel rolls as the main wheel spins. The "Sky Diver" is perhaps the perfect metaphor for Gordy's remarkable and varied careers.]

Between 1964 and 1968, he travelled to 28 shows in 19 states and two Canadian provinces, eventually becoming head of transportation and logistics for these operations. In 1968 he was hired to build and operate game and food concessions on the Midway at the San Antonio Hemisfair (in Texas), and he worked successfully to turn around and make profitable the Golden Garter saloon that was owned by 13 of San Antonio's wealthiest businessmen. His career continued to develop in several unexpected directions. He obtained an opportunity to teach American history in San Antonio (he said he was hired because the school system needed someone capable of maintaining order in the classroom). He also became a deputy sheriff, and was given a small role in the movie Viva Max!

Which gave him the experience of working alongside actors including Jonathan Winters and other well-known performers.

**Back to Maple Ridge – the 70s**

in 1969 – 1975, he purchased and operated a struggling taxi company, helped establish H&R Block Realty, invested in real estate, set up Maple Ridge answering service and Tri-Way garbage disposal. In April 1970 he became the first president of the BC Taxi Owners Association. His interests soon expanded into local government and community planning. In September 1970, he was the chairman of the first meeting of the Town Core Redevelopment Committee of Maple Ridge. In 1972 he became the chairman of the new Maple Ridge Advisory Planning Commission. He also helped Mel Couvelier become elected as the president of the BC Liberal party.

**Moved to Vancouver – 1975- 1979**

During this period his business ventures included two English style pubs, the Horse and Carriage, and the King's Head Inn, in a business association with Nelson Skalbania (an engineer and businessman from Vancouver, who is best known for signing a then 17-year-old Wayne Gretzky to the Indianapolis Racers of the World Hockey Association, and for his high-profile real estate flipping). Other business ventures that Gordy was involved in included the Rembrandt Hotel, the Edmonton Oilers (as its executive VP), the Vancouver Whitecaps, and the British School of Motor Racing in California. One notable operation was Glacier Park Lodge, which Gordy's family operated for approximately 30 years. A recurring theme throughout his career was not simply to liquidate troubled properties, but to save the underlying business whenever possible.

**Maple Ridge 1980s**

The following are just a few of the numerous events and businesses that kept Gordy busy in the 1980's:

- Meadowridge Shopping Centre
- Taking in foster children
- Member of the Maple Ridge Volunteer Fire department (1980 – 1988)
- Established The News (1980) - awarded Best Newspaper in its class, and Sunday news largest in Canada
- Founded the Meadowridge Independent School
- Construction of the former Best Western motel

Gordon became increasingly involved in politics. He worked on political campaigns and eventually became involved with the provincial government under Premier Bill Bennett, when he was appointed to the BC building Corporation.

Gordy emphasized that his success was not the result of personally doing every task. Instead, he credited his ability to find the right people and give them responsibility. He commented, "I don't really do anything".

**1990's**

Another extraordinary chapter in Gordy's career involved international political and educational work, which he became involved in through international political contacts during a period when the Soviet bloc was undergoing dramatic political changes. Gordy took an Eastern European Tour where he taught a class in democracy at the Karl Marx University.

His long-standing interest in world affairs continued when he went to the world's Fair in Seville, Spain, in 1992. His organization operated two large restaurants, including a Wild-West-themed saloon, called the Rocky Mountain Saloon & Bier Festhaus.

Back home, community and business activities and recognitions included Meadowridge School expansion, Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year, Adopt-A-Block, six Slumber Lodge/Best Western motel properties in Prince George City Centre, and the St. John Ambulance campaign. Gordy was a founding member of the Alouette River Management Society (ARMS) when it was formed in 1993.

**2000's**

Gordy spearheaded the Maple Ridge Crystal Meth Task Force, and was awarded the 2005 British Columbia Solicitor General Community Safety Award which recognized the group's highly public and impactful "Life or Meth" awareness campaign, aimed to combat an epidemic of crystal methamphetamine use, specifically focusing on educating young people in schools about the dangers of crystal meth. The "Life or Meth" slogan to emphasize that trying the drug even once could lead to immediate addiction and ruin.

Gordy was the Mayor of Maple Ridge from 2005 to 2008, and after taking some time away from city hall, he successfully won consecutive elections in 2014 and 2018 as a city councillor. In 2016 he took into his home Syrian refugee families for approximately two years, and later families from Ukraine also lived with them for approximately the same time period.

**Rotary Service**

Gordon and Mary were both founding members of our Meadow Ridge Rotary Club that was chartered on March 3, 1990. Mary was Club President in 2004- 2005. Through Rotary, they started the Hometown Heroes program and the annual Sports Banquet in 2006, which attracted many BC sports and radio/TV personalities, such as John McKeachie in attendance. In 2011 they started the annual Rotary Duck Race.

For a few years they switched to the Mission Club, and then to the Rotary Club of Lahaina in Hawaii (where they owned a condominium for many years); they rejoined our Meadow Ridge Rotary Club a few years ago. They have thus maintained their continuous membership in Rotary International for over 36 years.

Gordon and Mary connected their international travels and experiences to Rotary, visiting Rotary clubs around the world and observing the organization's role in communities undergoing significant political and social change. He recalled Rotary's presence in Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet system and the re-emergence of Rotary clubs in countries where they had previously been restricted. He also described travelling internationally in connection with Rotary-supported projects. One particularly meaningful example involved a Rotary project in Cambodia, and seeing the effects of poverty and landmines, including children who had suffered devastating injuries. He became involved in efforts to support projects addressing these needs. Following one of his presentations in Thailand, Gordon attracted the attention of local officials and was subsequently advised to leave the country quickly. He humorously recalled being asked whether he would like to spend the night at the Canadian Consulate (providing an illustration of how Gordy's willingness - and tendency - to speak openly sometimes created unexpected consequences).

Club Business and Activities

September 7-13 – annual camping event at Fort Langley

September 10 – Public Hub at Fort Langley

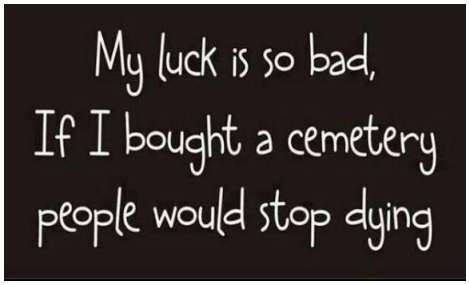
October 20 – District Gov. club visit

Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive

This Drive collects food for our local Friends in Need Foodbank (see the "Volunteer Handout" attached which very clear explains how you can assist). All you need to do is sign up, pick a route from the list, pick up your empty brown bags, deliver one bag to every single front door on your route (..no need to talk to anybody.....just leave the bag by the front door), return to every single front door on Saturday morning Sept 19....and PU the filled bag and drop off at drop off point on 207th.....that's it!!!!! It works best if you go with at least one "partner", who can drive the car, while you're doing the drop off/PU.....

Ineke says: "Hope you can help with this very worthwhile cause.....and have fun doing it!"

President's Closing Quote:




**Submitted by Laurie Anderson**

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**2026 BC Thanksgiving Food Drive | Maple Ridge**

## The Need in Our Community

Our local Friends in Need Food Bank is facing historic demand, currently serving nearly 1,000 households every month—a staggering 85% increase over the last five years. At the same time, community food donations have dropped sharply. They need our help to restock the shelves for the autumn season.

We are seeking volunteers to adopt donation routes. Volunteering requires 2-3 hours, spread across the week. Here's how it works.

## How the Food Drive Works

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 1: Sign Up** | Go online to select a donation collection route that fits your preference. Please claim multiple routes if desired. |
| **Step 2: Bag Pick-Up** | Select a convenient date to pick up your bundle of official food drive paper bags. |
| **Step 3: Bag Drop-Off (Sept 14 – 17)** | Anytime between Monday and Thursday, walk or drive your assigned route. Place one (1) bag on each doorstep. The bags contain clear, pre-printed printing instructions for homeowners. |
| **Step 4: Collection (Saturday, Sept 19)** | Return to your route between 9:15 AM and 12:00 PM to gather filled donation bags left out on doorsteps. Drop off all collected items at the central hub (11750 207th Street) by 1:00 PM. |

**READY TO SIGN-UP?**

**Go online to: https://fooddrivemapleridg.wixsite.com/2026**

### Questions & Support

**Route Coordinator:** Josh Penner 604-317-4487
**Email:** fooddrivemapleridgeward@gmail.com
**Drop-Off Hub:** 11750 207th Street, Maple Ridge

Or scan QR Code to Sign-up

**Contact Central**