

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, Bella Vita Restaurant

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## JANUARY IS VOCATIONAL SERVICE MONTH

**Today** (Jan 16):

**Next Week** (Jan 23):

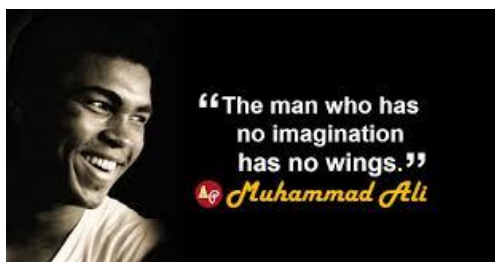
Happy Birthday		Happy Anniversary
Jan. 17:	Irena Shantz	
Jan. 20:	Betty Levens & Urma Mollema	

## CALENDAR OF CLUB AND DISTRICT EVENTS:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
Feb. 9-11		Presidential Peace Building Conference <a href="https://environmentandpeace.com">https://environmentandpeace.com</a>	Hyatt Regency Vancouver
May 8-12		District Conference	MS Eurodam

### LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President Libby's opening quote:



This special Club meeting was held at Meadows Gardens Golf Club, at which we invited other Rotarian clubs in our area to attend to hear the Vice President of Rotary International, Dean Rohrs, to speak to us. We had 48 Rotarians and guests in attendance. Rotarians attended from the following clubs in addition to our own: Haney, Coquitlam Sunrise, Coquitlam, and Port Coquitlam Centennial.



Special thanks go to our **AG Preet Pall** who spread the word and brought with her 15 other Rotarians from her morning Club, and to Sharon Kyle who arranged with the Meadow Garden Golf Club to waive the meeting-room fee.

Program:

**Dean Rohrs, Rotary International Vice President for 2017 - 18.**

Introduction of Speaker: As a very young nurse in Cape Town South Africa, Dean was part of Dr. Christiaan Bernard's historic heart transplant team, back on December 3, 1967. She emigrated to Canada from South Africa about 28 years ago, with her husband Rhinhold (Rhino) and their three children. She and Rhino are the owners and operators of a company that supplies road stabilization products for road construction. Since joining Rotary, Dean has served as a Regional Rotary Foundation coordinator, as District Governor, as one of 17 Directors of the Rotary International Board (representing Canada, Bermuda, Alaska, and 10 other states in the US northeast), and now as the Vice President of Rotary International.

The theme of VP Rohrs' talk was "**her journey as a Rotarian**". Dean's father was a Rotarian in South Africa, but she says that she, herself, was a non-Rotarian for many years. She got involved in Rotary when she married Rhino who, like her father, was also a Rotarian. She is probably the only executive of Rotary international who is ever asked to leave a Rotary club. She joined a Rotary club in Vancouver, and they apparently did not like her progressive ways, and she received a letter requesting that she moved to another Club. (She says

that she “got her revenge” when, as she moved higher up in Rotary, she attended the same club and spoke to them about how to bring in and retain members). Dean says “there is a place for everyone in Rotary”.

She always wanted to be a game Ranger in South Africa and, despite her other professional responsibilities, took a course on game management, and then worked on a game farm in South Africa. A woman who worked in the game farm had two small children with her, and she asked Dean if she would drive her and the children outside of the game Park where her children could be dropped off and walk to school. Noting the tears in the mother’s eyes as they drove back to the Game Park leaving the children by themselves on the road, Dean asked the mother whether she was crying because she missed her children, and the mother replied that she was worried for the safety of her daughters. The mother said that men in that community believe that having sex with underage children would protect them against AIDS. Dean took action with the help of Rotary to educate men and families in that area about AIDS, which resulted in discussion among members of the community (including children) and a change in attitudes towards the problem. With this experience, Dean learned of the work that Rotary can do in changing lives for the good. But she said that when we change the lives of others, we also change ourselves.



Rotary is made up of four levels: Clubs, Districts, Zones, and then the Rotary International organization of the top. (When asked to be a District Governor, she agreed. “Who wouldn’t want to tell all these old man what to do?”). She eventually became a “RRIMC”, which stands for Regional Rotary International Membership Coordinator. This took her to Russia and other parts of the world, and gave her an understanding of what Rotary is and does. She came to realize that what we, in Canada and the United States, want from Rotary is 100% different from what others in other parts of the World expect and get out of Rotary. Rotary is flexible in that regard, and what we want and expect from Rotary is not necessarily the only or right way of doing things.

At the international level, 17 directors are elected that meet three or four times per year. These directors represent many cultures and many languages - such as Korean, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.. When the directors meet, there are eight different language interpreters as, of course, not everyone speaks the same language.

The Board of Directors deals with various things including District Governor matters, and problems from District levels. Parallel to the Board of Directors of Rotary International, is the Board of Trustees of the Rotary Foundation. Foundation Directors were previously appointed by the president (and not elected), but more recently the President has set up a Committee to recommend Trustees. Regarding Rotary International, the President selects persons from second-year directors to be the Vice President.

When the president asked Dean if she would be the Vice President for 2017 – 2018, Dean was dumbfounded. The president said “for God’s sake, Dean, breathe”.

“What an opportunity” it was to be Vice President, Dean said. In that capacity she has been to Africa three times, and to Taiwan, Russia, and Pakistan and she will be going to Nepal. “You get meet such great people, and see where the money that you donate to the Rotary Foundation is going and is used for.” She has had the opportunity to sit and discuss matters with Bill Gates, who has donated more than a half a billion dollars to the Rotary Foundation.

When she arrived in Pakistan, the path in front of her and her husband were strewn with rose petals almost 6 inches deep (and she wondered what dignitary or famous person had been there before them to deserve that). She then discovered it was in her honour, and more than 50 Rotarians were present to greet her. She was escorted to her hotel by police vehicles both in the front and at the rear of her vehicle, and a man in the vehicle in front was standing through the roof of the vehicle throwing rose petals in front of them all away to the hotel. They were then taken to breakfast in a famous fort, which was closed to all others for the occasion just because they were there. Dean says that she is just “an ordinary Rotarian”, and was not used to this type of treatment.

One of Dean’s concerns is the bureaucracy of Rotary Clubs, which discourages change, but she believes change is necessary to attract young people. Frankly, she said “clubs are constipated”. We need to be thinking about other ways to work in Rotary that will be relevant to potential members and the community. For example, have satellite clubs where people can come together and work on a project that they have a passion about, without attending weekly Rotary meetings. Rotary Clubs and Rotary itself may be dying because of an “Anglo mentality”, she observed. We should ask ourselves: what kind of the club does our community want and need?

Dean is the only woman among the 17 Board of Directors. It was only about 30 years ago that women were allowed to join Rotary, and it takes a person about 30 years to work through the levels of Rotary and do all the things that you need to do in order to qualify to become president. Also, a person has to have the money to do work at the International level in the organization because it gets expensive, and Rotary does not pay much of a stipend to cover that. Directors and the President are expected to fund this themselves. This is one reason why there are not very many women at the Rotary International level of the organization.

President Libby’s closing quote for the day:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson