



Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, Virtual Meeting

President: Clint Callison  
Secretary: Brenda Jenkins  
Editor: Peter Boekhorst

Phone: 604-460-3650  
Phone: 604-816-6961  
Phone: 604-465-3392

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



## FEBRUARY IS PEACE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION/RESOLUTION MONTH

Happy Birthday	Happy Anniversary
Feb. 19: Mark Forster	

### UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

Feb 16: Shashanka Vangari Cancer and Rare Disease Research	Feb 23: Malcolm Kennedy Rotary Foundation	Mar 02: Mayor Mike Morden Development in Maple Ridge
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### OUR CLUB LAST WEEK'S MEETING:

Patrick Dobbyn presided.

Invocation by **Libby Nelson**:

Libby's invocation expanded on the following statement by Helen Keller:



Program: **Christine Patton** - Keeping Rotary Sustainable and Vibrant

**Christine was introduced by Roger Powley:**



Roger met Christine in Kelowna when she joined the Rotary club there in 2017. She is a "Renaissance Woman", said Roger, "who has gone through several iterations". After attending law school, she practised law in Ontario for several years. She was then appointed a judge, a position that she held for approximately 15 years. Thereafter, she decided to move to Kelowna and become an inspirational speaker and executive coach. She wrote a book entitled "Showing Up – Becoming the Me I Want To Be", and hosted a radio talk show on Voice America.

[We learn, on-line, that when asked what inspired her to write the book, she said, "Leaving my profession as a lawyer left me questioning who I was and what I was supposed to be doing. I wondered what went so horribly wrong in my career choice. As I set out to satisfy those queries, opportunities, people, and events came my way that helped me learn some fundamental truths about life. I realized all I had to do was ask".]

A summary of Christine's presentation:

There is an old adage which says, "There are leaders and there are those who lead". Leadership is essential in Rotary, and good leadership is needed for Rotary to get the job done. Rotary is experiencing a setback in membership. Over the past eight years there has been a 14% attrition rate in Rotary membership. Globally, the age of members has climbed to 58. Rotary has struggled to attract young professionals (like those who started Rotary in the first place). Special skills will be required to sustain Rotary membership, and we must ask ourselves, "how can we do better?". Brad Howard, a former Rotary International Director, said that if we take care of our members, they will take care of the world. He was concerned that Rotary had focused so much on its ethos of 'service above self' that it had forgotten to serve the very people it had been established to help, namely, its own members. He disagreed with the statement that Rotary was the greatest service organization in the world; rather, he said that Rotary is a membership organization that does great service, thereby putting the emphasis on the membership.

There is a danger in being married to the idea of doing and approaching things the same as they have been done in the past. How can we innovate? The answer begins with thinking. Rotary is a business, and when it holds funds in trust for use in the world it must be held to the same standards. Even if it is a charity, it must innovate. The catalyst for change is thinking differently about our organization. There are many examples of companies who have failed to adjust to the changes in the world. Blockbuster, for example, failed to adapt to the subscription method of distributing

movies (it is said that the directors were so fixed on earning profits from late fees that they failed to innovate - compare to Netflix). And we know what happened to Kodak which not adapt to digital. During COVID some restaurants were fast to adapt to “takeout and delivery”. We need not be afraid of change or we will be subsumed by it. Intelligence is usually thought of as the ability to think and learn; but in a rapidly changing world the ability to ‘rethink and unlearn’ may matter more.

The evidence is that membership in Rotary is dwindling, and without membership Rotary cannot endure into the future. Change needs to be made at the grassroots level. How do we attract younger people? It is not true that young people do not want to give back to their community, and therefore that is not the problem. Enticing them to come to Rotary may be the problem. Businesses have changed about how they communicate. People now live and communicate on their devices, and if we are not there, we will not attract members. We live in an information and technological age. It is paramount to appear interesting, current and welcoming. We need to review how, when and with whom we run our meetings. Maybe our agenda or the time and day of our meetings does not work. For example, if we have noon meetings, will this timetable suit the people whom we want as members? What are the individual members interested in? What does each want to give back to the community? How can we be more welcoming in words, actions and methods? Remember, people may forget what you said and how you set it, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

#### Comments and Questions:

Our president-elect **Patrick Dobbyn**, who has recently spent a lot of time attending PETS, said that these questions are incredibly timely and coincide precisely with what they have been talking about at those PETS meetings: adaptability, the generation gap, membership growth and retention. Membership is down 19% in North America in the last decade. The rest of the world is down only 1% or 2%. There is a perception that younger Rotarians think the older Rotarians are more concerned about lunch and having fun, and that older Rotarians don’t think younger Rotarians want to do things (and these perception have to change).

**Deborah Hyslop** feels we need to open up a little and be closer to the people we help. We need to make ourselves more accessible, and be prepared to give them our contact information. Young people are the supreme beings about giving back and that is why they’re so exciting to be around.

**Eric Mollema** commented that the customers of our club are our members - and not the community. He observes that most of our focus is on community service, but we should not forget the other five avenues of service [Club, Vocational, Community, International and New Generations]. We must sit down and discuss these matters and ask why we are losing members, and start thinking differently.

**Libby Nelson** believes that newer members don’t necessarily want to come to three or four meetings to see if they like us and wish to join our club, and we need to be open to any new ideas.

**Ineke Boekhorst** feels, on a positive note, that Rotary has grown as a result of COVID by going online, which gives us the opportunity to have guest speakers who live far away (like our current speaker) that would otherwise not be possible, thereby enhancing our meetings.

**Roger** noted that we need to have further meetings on the subject of how to make our meetings more vibrant; and observed that meetings can be a barrier to membership and retention.

Our guest speaker **Christine Patton** concluded by saying that we must discuss our club’s sustainability and what actually works; and look at the evidence, ask ourselves what are our values, and what we have to do to create a vehicle to realize those values. How much fun we have with each other? We need to project an outer expression of fun, which will make our meetings attractive. Attracting members involves the fun factor, which is an outer expression of our inner connection with people. We should develop a close connection and interest in Interact and Rotaract.

**Matt** noted that in the past decade, since our South African members joined our club, there has been a noticeable difference in our club’s fun factor.

#### Happy and Sad Dollars:

**Matt DeBruyn** (who recently celebrated fourscore years of life on this planet) volunteered to rejuvenate the club by resigning, thereby “reducing the average age of our membership”, but **Libby**, who has scored a few years herself (like a few others of us), threw in some bucks to make sure that this innovative idea did not take hold!

**Lynda Lawrence** has learned that **Brenda Jenkins** is now the third member of our Rotary family that has been diagnosed with cancer, and will be undergoing treatment.

#### Quote for the day:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson