



The History of Christmas Bart Dailley

In This Issue

- 1 Speaker December 7th
Bart Dailley
'The History of Christmas'
- 2 Meeting Minutes December 7th
- 3 Thank You Roses Presentation

Member News
- 4 Did You Know or Wish To Know?

Call to Action
- 5 What's Up !!

Christmas Get-Together

'The History of Christmas' cont'd

Meeting Minutes December 7th cont'd



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Rotary Club of Calcutta-Mahanagar, West Bengal India

District 5360 Governor Martin Parnell
Rotary Club of Cochrane

Our speaker today was our very own Bart Dailley. He spoke about the History of Christmas, and while your scribe will do his best to capture some of these moments of history, he acknowledges up front that it is impossible to capture Bart's speaking skill, his humour, and his delivery style.

The concept of Christmas began in the lands of Rome during the first century when people wanted to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Rome had many governing rules, one of which outlawed new religions. So the followers of Jesus had to be covert in their desire to celebrate, and this led to December 25th being chosen as the day of celebration. It seems that there was a non-related festival taking place from December 17th to 24th, which meant that a celebration on the 25th wouldn't be noticed as the Roman dignitaries would be distracted and hung over.

In the 4th century, Constantine became a Christian so it became safe to celebrate Jesus. The Christian Pope confirmed to the people that Jesus was in fact born on December 25th so it fit right in with the existing celebrations. Nordic and Germanic peoples moved into the Roman lands, and they added their own celebration styles to the Christmas season.

Germany adopted the celebration of Christmas in the year 813, and by 900, the entirety of Europe had joined this tradition. In the 1500s Italy's Francis of Assisi introduced the concept of the Nativity scene, showing Jesus' birth with the three wise men and the Star of David.

From the English perspective, Henry the 8th, Elizabeth the 1st, and James the 1st all celebrated Christmas. When the Protestants were in charge, Catholics had to be restrained in their activities, and in 1600 the puritans took control and Christians were told to celebrate at home and not in public. Queen Victoria revived Christmas in Britain.

In 1818 the Christmas Carol story was created and turned into a play, and the song 'Silent Night' was written. In the late 1800s the concept of Santa Claus was created and the poem "'twas the Night Before Christmas" was written.

In 1931 the US firm known as Coca Cola hired an artist to come up with a visual image which would attract young people to their product, and he came up with a picture of two young people giving a cola bottle to Santa Claus. Santa had previously been depicted wearing a green coat and the artist changed it to red to conform with the Coke brand.

Bob May made up a story about a red-nosed reindeer named Rudolf for his children and ultimately, was encouraged to write it up for others to enjoy.

cont'd on page 4 ...

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December 7th, 2021

Scribe: Paul Gaudet

Rob called our meeting to order at 12:15pm, welcoming all participants and then, for the first time in 21 months, asked everyone to stand and join Ruth Wiley on the piano in singing our National Anthem. It was absolutely wonderful to be back in the 'Desert Palms' once again!

We had 26 members prepay to attend lunch in-person, and while we look forward to having more of our members feel sufficiently comfortable about joining us, it was great to see our friends once again.

Rob asked Paul to introduce our guests and he was pleased to welcome our single visitor, Barb Warburton, the wife of Bart Dailley. Bart is our guest speaker today so Barb came along to enjoy his presentation on 'The History of Christmas'.

Rob announced that Paul was our Scribe at today's meeting and went on to thank Stephen and Anne Pick for their continuing efforts in generating our fantastic e-Arch. They do a wonderful job and we are so fortunate to have them in our Club.

Rob asked for any information on the **health** of our members and there was no information provided. As usual we take this lack of information to be a good sign.

He then introduced our **Chase the Ace** segment by advising that we have 29 participants this month, meaning that we are generating \$116 for our Club with \$87 for today's winner. There is \$460 in the 'Pot' should the daily winner select the Ace of Spades. Garth Sabirsh continued his run of good luck and won the daily prize. He selected the five of hearts so our Pot will continue to grow.

This meeting is our **Annual General Meeting** so Rob introduced our nominees for next year's **Board of Directors**. The three new Directors are Ted Wada, Stephen Pick and Anne Dale. Our President Elect is Anthony Tonkinson. As there are no other nominees, these members are elected by acclamation and will be part of next year's Board. Rob expressed the gratitude of our Club to each of these individuals for agreeing to step forward and be involved in Club leadership.

Rob also thanked George Kimura and Paul Gaudet for assisting with the **Nomination Committee** this year.

Rob announced a number of winners from our **Flames Goal Scoring Pool**, and the two in attendance today were Paul G and Al Holt, so each received a \$20 prize.

The **Rotary Minute Segment** today saw Paul provide an update on our ongoing fundraising project, "Thank the teachers and support staff by buying them a Rose". We are working with four area schools (with which we have historical relationships), and have already presented our flowers and cards of appreciation to the staff of Dr E P Scarlett High School on November 26th. Paul related how great it felt to see the genuine appreciation in the eyes of their staff as they were thanked for all they are doing during the difficult COVID period. We are presenting to our second school, Henry Wise Wood High School, this week, on Friday, December 10th. He thanked all our members and friends who have donated to this project and asked those who have not yet done so to kindly consider supporting this worthwhile project.

Rob then called on our **Speaker** Bart Dailley to tell us about the History of Christmas. Afterwards, Rob thanked Bart for this thoughtful presentation.

Rob then thanked everyone for their patience during our ZOOM experience, and confirmed that we have a number of members who were not comfortable attending in-person meetings as of yet. He went on to thank Paul Hussey and Dave Wiley for all their help getting set up for this first meeting back at the Carriage House.

Our **next meeting** will be on Tuesday, December 21st at noon, also at the Carriage House. We will be using the same procedure for that meeting in that anyone interested in attending must send Al \$30 on or before the Sunday prior to our meeting ... the 19th. In addition they must confirm their menu choice to Rob. The agenda for the meeting will be mid-year Director Reports, updating us on the various areas of Club activity.

Rob asked for a show of hands from everyone who would be interested in attending an **informal Christmas Dinner** at a restaurant yet to be identified. He advised that he would look into potential sites and let us know.

Our meeting wrapped up with Bart reciting a lovely story about a Christian looking forward to a visit from Jesus on Christmas Day. While he waited patiently for the promised visit,

cont'd on page 5 ...



Thank You Roses Presentation @ Henry Wise Wood HS



A message received from the Principal of Henry Wise Wood

Good evening, everyone,

Please find attached some lovely photos of today's Rose Campaign presentation. I have to tell you that there were many smiles of appreciation throughout our day thanks to your generous recognition and words of acknowledgement and inspiration.

Wishing you all a peaceful and wonderful winter holiday season; you have made such a difference for our Warrior family.

Aileen

Photos courtesy Paul Gaudet, George Kimura & the Principal

Member News Syed Ahmed

Participation in Rotary RCIM Club Activities. A visit to welcome Indian delegates of District 3090 at Guru Nanak Birthplace in Pakistan. The visit was organized by Rotary District 3272 Pakistan.



To promote cleanliness at a tourist resort near Islamabad ... distribution of Garbage Bins to Hill Top Restaurant of Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan. The activity was organized by the Rotary Club of Islamabad Metropolitan, Pakistan.



Jim Thompson, President 81/82, Charter Member

As time goes by in this service club, part of a huge international and very inclusive organization, there are constant changes in the manner in which we function but not in the motto, Service Above Self, or the principals of the FOUR WAY TEST. On the other hand, club demographics changed, attendance rules relaxed, meeting places and Board meeting venues changed, focus on fellowship declined somewhat, and then along came the international pandemic COVID that really threw a curve at everything.

From the beginning of our club in the 70s, we followed hard and fast attendance rules. Miss one meeting, noticed but not uncommon. Miss two in a row, get a notice from the club secretary, that one more without explanation or proof of make-up would result in expulsion! if a holiday was taken where Rotary had a presence, you were expected to include attendance there as part of your holiday. If no Rotary was available, you requested a leave of absence for the time away. 100% attendance by members was rewarded annually by presentation of a pin acknowledging the member's efforts. Some of which in our club, were successful for uninterrupted attendance for decades, makeups included of course! The photo shows club members in 1985 being acknowledged for 100% attendance or longer that year, many you can still recognize that continue as members now.



Before the joint Calgary clubs began a program of recognizing community individuals through Integrity Awards, our club was already doing it annually. Club members were invited to submit the name of a candidate with a summary as to why. The club



committee would review each, and select one, who would be presented with a Paul Harris Fellowship at a regular meeting, and have his or her special contribution recognized. We did a number of these over the years. The photo shows the late Esther Robins receiving her award. She was the founder of CANCERMOUNT, an organization dedicated to the fighting of cancer. Her Husband Murray Robins, now in his mid 90s is in the photo too.

The Board used to meet once every month, at a different Board member's home. The hosting member provided light snacks after the meeting and some wine or beer, coffee or soft drinks as part of the fellowship. There was no expense submitted to the club.

Attendance at the RI Convention was encouraged, to the incoming President but not mandatory. There was no club expense budget for this Convention in the early years, some of us covered the cost on our own. Later the club became better funded so as to cover the incoming President's travel and registration cost, in the hopes the experience would benefit the club when he or she was in office.

District Conferences were usually multi Member participation and more social. The district was huge then, taking in all Alberta, the SW corner of Saskatchewan and NE corner of BC. Now we have the challenge of restoring club activity to before COVID nightmares.

Merry Christmas All!

Call to Action



The Fairview School Mentor Program is starting up again for 2022 with Chinook Rotary Youth Services and Chair John Charrett. It is a key component of our ongoing partnership with Fairview Junior High School, supporting under-serviced youth.

The Mentoring Program needs volunteers to provide fellowship with the students and mentoring support. **If you can spare the time to volunteer with the program (2 hours on 10 Friday afternoons in January - May) please contact John or myself.**



Sessions will be held at Roots 2 STEM where students will build projects with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The address is 6115 - 10th Street SE, Calgary.

This is a great program working with youth to build their confidence and self-esteem. It is a group mentoring system, so if things come up, you can miss the occasional session.

Thank you!
Dean White
Director, Youth Services
Rotary Club of Calgary Chinook



Disease Prevention and Treatment Month

December 21st Club Assembly — Directors' updates

2022

Vocational Service Month

** All January meetings will be via ZOOM **

January 4th Diane Stevenson, Life Coach — New Year's Goals
 January 18th Jorges Torres — Habitat for Humanity
 January 27th Dixon's Networking Night, 7 - 8:30pm
 Speaker: TBD

Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month

February 1st Danielle Murphy and Lori Wilson — Kerby Center



Christmas Get-Together



We are not having a "formal" Christmas party this year, but I have made a group reservation for us to meet together to enjoy some Holiday fellowship and a good meal to celebrate the Season. It is a private reservation so it will only be our group. You will need to show your proof of double vaccination or negative COVID test within 72 hours in order to enter the facility.

Wednesday December 22nd

Drinks and fellowship at 6:15pm - 7:00pm

Dinner at 7:00pm - 8:30pm

@ McKenzie Meadows Golf Course (main club house)

The cost for meal is \$34.95 per person, plus your beverages (and taxes and gratuity). You just pay our own tab at the event like when you go out for dinner.

Enjoy our Chef-Prepared 4 Course Dinner

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup with nutmeg crème fraise

Festive Mixed Green Salad

with Pomegranate Cucumber and Goat Cheese with house made White Balsamic Honey Vinaigrette

Choice of:

(all entrees served with a chef selection of mixed fresh seasonal vegetables):

Roast Turkey Dinner

with Stuffing, Mashed Potato, Rich Gravy and Cranberry Sauce
or

Pork Tenderloin Medallions

with Mashed Potato and a tangy Orange Cranberry Glaze
or

Salmon and Prawn Duo

with Rice Pilaf and Lemon Cream Drizzle

Dessert: Rum and Egnog Cheesecake

If you are interested in attending, please email me at

robwolfrotary@shaw.ca

Spouses are encourage to attend. Let me know by **Tuesday, December 21st** how many members and spouses, and if there any dietary restrictions to let them know about.

The History of Christmas

... cont'd from page 1

It sold 6 million copies and in 1948, Gene Autry made it into a Christmas song and the rest is history. It is second only to 'White Christmas' in sales.

Bart then moved on to personal memories of Christmas past which were both humorous and moving. He says that he doesn't really miss his days as Santa Claus' assistant, but he does miss his many wonderful experiences associated with his involvement with the Santa Claus Parade. He told us about a lad who saw Bart going into his house, still dressed as Santa, and knocked on his door and said, "My brother says Santa is not real", to which Bart responded by reaching out towards the boy and said, "Ggo ahead, touch my arm, now you know I'm real". This led to a number of continuing knocks on the door as the boy took full advantage of his private access to Santa.

Another story was about a boy who begged his mother to ask Bart if he was Santa. Bart said he was and the boy nervously approached and Bart tells the boy to keep his secret and not tell others he was Santa. It turns out that Bart had occasion to visit a school shortly after this took place, and who turns up but the same boy who he had asked not to tell. Bart proceeds to tell the boy that he is only pretending to be Bart Dailley and asks him once again no to tell anyone he is Santa.

Bart also told us about two brothers that he met during a Santa session. The first boy started telling Bart about the items he wanted for Christmas, and kept going for the longest time, a long list for sure. When the brother had a chance to ask Santa for what it was he wanted, he paused for a moment and then said, "What I want is that you give my brother everything he wants, we don't know how long we'll have him". After the session Bart spoke to their parents and discovered that the first boy had terminal cancer. The boy passed the following August.

Meeting Minutes

he interacted with three seemingly unrelated ... cont'd from page 2

people in need ... a poor street person, a lost child and a third person in need (who my faulty memory cannot recall). It turned out that all three of these people were in fact Jesus, who blessed the Christian, and told him how well he had treated all three of his visitors that day. A moving story which rang perfectly for a pre-Christmas meeting.

Have a great Rotary week!