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## 2023-2024 Officers and Directors

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Rob Wolfson, President Elect  
Bev Tonkinson, Past President  
Dale Perret, Secretary  
Vlad Sasarman, Treasurer

Pam Montgomery, International Service  
Dean White, Youth Service  
Ted Wada, Community Service  
Sharon Fraiman, Club Service  
Neil Beatty, Club Operations  
Paul Gaudet, Club Financial  
TBD, Membership Chair  
TBD, Rotary Foundation Chair

RI President Gordon R. McNally  
Rotary Club of South Queensferry, Lothian Scotland  
District 5360 Governor Kurt Kowalchuk  
Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown

## First Nations Relationships

### Cam Stewart, District Indigenous Relations Officer



Our speaker, Cam Stewart, was introduced by Keith Wellon. Cam has been active in diversity, inclusion and human rights for twenty five years. He has received several awards for his work, including the Jewish Repairing the World Award, and the YMCA Peace Medal.

Within Indigenous circles, Cam has been honoured with an eagle feather from Elder Doreen Spence, and has been gifted the Blackfoot name of Mikostahpinukum (Red Morning) by Herman Yellow Old Woman. Under Cam's leadership and guidance, the Calgary Police Service and the Alberta Human Rights Commission received the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Diversity Award. In 2023, Rotary International acknowledged Cam with the "Person of Action: Champion of Inclusion Award", and he was presented with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal. Cam is a member of Calgary East Rotary Club and is a Paul Harris Fellow. He and his partner Marina have five children and nine grandchildren.

Cam began his presentation by noting that it is indeed a pleasure to be here today. He notes that he is just like everyone else, grew up in Ontario and comes from a family of immigrants. He asked for a show of hands for anyone in the room who was ever taught during their education about the *cont'd on page 5 ...*

## Personal Story

### Andrea Hill, Professional Opera Singer

Bruce Bohnet introduced our guest speaker today. Bruce and Bernice have been close family friends with Andrea's family for many years so it was a wonderful opportunity for Bruce to introduce Andrea today. They have watched her progress through her early years as she developed her singing voice in the Calgary Girls Choir and the Young Canadians in the Calgary Stampede evening show. Andrea carried her talent and music pursuit to McGill University in Montreal, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Music with distinction. She then continued on to the University of Maryland College Park, where she graduated with a Masters of Music in Opera Performance.



With dedication and persistence, Andrea joined the European opera circuit, singing in all the major opera houses including the beautiful Garnier Opera House in Paris. It was here that Bernice and Bruce had the privilege of attending one of Andrea's performances. You can follow Andrea's opera schedule on her website

[www.andreahillsings.com](http://www.andreahillsings.com)

*cont'd on page 6 ...*

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President Elect Rob called our meeting to order at 12:15, welcoming all in attendance. He noted that our Rotary Theme is to “Create Hope in the World”, then led us in the singing of O Canada.

### First Nations Information

There are more than 630 First Nations communities in Canada, which represent more than 50 Indigenous languages. The largest first nation in Canada is the Cree, which includes more than 120,000 people. In comparison, the Tsuu’tina Nation population is slightly less than 3,000.



We had 25 participants at our meeting today which included 2 **Guests**: Guest Speaker (District Indigenous Relations Chair) Cam Stewart, and Haim Fraiman, guest of Sharon. Our guests were introduced by Alex Soutar and welcomed with our “Welcome to Rotary” verse.

Rob **thanked** Paul for being our scribe today. He also thanked Alex and Joe for being our greeters today, and for making everyone feel welcome. Rob thanked Stephen and Anne for all they do for our Club, most notably the regular production of our e-arch. He also thanked Paul H and his volunteers for ensuring that our meeting room is set up and ready for our meetings each day. In addition, we also wish to thank both Hank and Peter for operating our payment system.



### Get to Know a Member

John Charrett was our ‘get-to-know-member’ today, and he began by telling us that in 1972 he was finishing his Masters Degree in structural engineering at Imperial College in London England when he was asked if he would like to join a design team which was going to travel to Calgary Alberta to design a new grandstand for the Calgary Stampede. After brief consideration he agreed to join the group and the rest, as they say, is

history. John ended up spending the majority of his career in Calgary. It was a great time to be an engineer, with Calgary growing from 450,000 people in 1972 to 1.4 million today.

A project that stands out for him was that he was the lead structural engineer for the Calgary Centre for Performing Arts, now called the Arts Commons, where the acoustics in the Jack Singer matches out at the top 10 concert halls in the world due to its shoe box shape. He was also the lead structural engineer on a number of hospital projects, including a parkade and an additional storey to the Rockyview Hospital, an extension to the Peter Lougheed Hospital, and the new South Health Campus.

John’s father was a Rotarian at the Rotary Club of Slough, 5 miles from Heathrow and Windsor. He was President of the club when they chartered a new club at Burnham not too far from Slough. As a coincidence, the Burnham club was twinned with the Rotary Club of Calgary North, and a group from the Rotary Club of Burnham was visiting Calgary North at the time he arrived in Calgary. He was taken under the wing of the North Club, and in particular, is appreciative of the assistance of Bob Hasnsell of Calgary North who ended up a long time friend, and who sponsored John into Rotary 47 years ago.

He now spends most of his time trying to keep up with his partner, Margaret. He is not always successful however, because she spends most of her time scrambling up mountains. He is now training for a hike up Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in Scotland at 1,300 meters, which is scheduled to take place next month.

### Club Business



- Hank Popoff is serving on the volunteer subcommittee of the Host Organizing Committee for the 2025 Calgary Rotary International Convention. They are looking for volunteers to work in the volunteers’ registration area. Computer skills are required. He would appreciate anyone interested to please contact him.

- Paul G presented a Paul Harris Fellowship pin, PH+5, (meaning a donation total of at least \$6,000

USD) to Garth Plunkett. It is through such generosity from our members that the Rotary Foundation is able to make miracles happen around the world. Special thanks to our many Paul Harris Fellows, and we hope they continue to support the Foundation.



### Chase the Ace

The winner of today's draw was Sandy Swan who will have to be contacted as she was not in attendance. She won a weekly prize of \$63, the Club gets \$83, and our new pot increases to \$201. Next week's draw will be from a 49 card deck.



### Sunshine Report

There was no news about the health of our members however, Rob noted that Ian Burgess was in attendance and that it was great to see him.

### Good News / Bad News

No news offered.

### Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker this week, introduced by Keith Wellon, was Cam Stewart, District Indigenous Relations Officer.



### Bylaw Amendments Vote

Paul G took the podium to proceed with our membership vote regarding our proposed bylaw amendments. He outlined that our club does amend our bylaws from time to time, and noted that the last time was in 2019. Our Board felt that there were a number of issues where amendments were necessary in order to acknowledge changes that have already occurred in recent times, and to update the actual bylaws accordingly.

Paul and Dave Wylie worked with the Board to prepare a report outlining the specific changes, with an explanation as to why said changes were being recommended. Paul noted that subsequent to this process, the actual changes were recommended to the Board in December 2023 and approved. This is one of the few areas in Rotary where the Board cannot make the final decision, as any changes to the bylaws must be initially approved by the Board, but secondly approved by our members.

As our secretary has noted previously, the meeting at which the amendments are to be voted on must have a quorum, which is

defined as one third of our members at that particular time. We made a count and confirmed that we did in fact have a quorum. In order to approve the amendments, there must be a positive vote representing 2/3rds of the members present.

Paul proposed the motion as follows:

"I move that the bylaw amendments which were forwarded to our membership by a notice dated March 18, 2024, be approved as recommended, subject to our secretary's housekeeping issues outlined by email on March 26, 2024."



At this point Secretary Dale took over and asked for a show of hands vote, which indicated a positive vote number in excess of the 2/3rds level of support. As a result the motion was carried.

### Dates to Remember

- April 16th Regular meeting at the Carriage House. Our speaker will be Andrea Hill, relating her story as a professional Opera Singer.
- April 25th Evening meeting at The Point

Rob thanked everyone for attending today, and asked all to stand and help close our meeting with a reading of Rotary's 4 Way Test.

Remember, "Create Hope in the World". Have a great Rotary week! Our meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

## Rotary International Convention

### 2025 Convention VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Remember the excitement and buzz in the city during the 1988 Winter Olympics? The city came alive with the thousands of volunteers who created an atmosphere of service. Again in 1996 when the Rotary Convention came to Calgary, volunteers from all over our district (Southern Alberta) made this an event to remember.

We have the opportunity to host the world in 2025 and NOW is the TIME to express your desire to volunteer for our convention. Rotary International handles everything inside the convention centre from speakers to entertainment to the amazing House of Friendship. The Host Organizing Committee (HOC ... you'll hear this acronym frequently throughout the year!), co-chaired by Mark Starratt and Craig Stokke, handles everything outside of the convention space.

The HOC needs us to assist in many ways. Right now HOC is recruiting volunteers. Please click here to add your name to the list of amazing folks who will welcome the world in June of 2025! [www.calgary2025rotaryconvention.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=81064](http://www.calgary2025rotaryconvention.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=81064)



Farid Bedwany  
Rotary Club of Calgary  
Downtown



President Anthony called our meeting to order at 12:15, welcoming all in attendance. He noted that our Rotary Theme is to “Create Hope in the World”, then asked Andrea Hill, an opera singer who is our guest speaker today, to lead us in singing O Canada. She did a wonderful job, and it was a rare opportunity to sing along with such a talent.

Keith and Glenda Wellon (49th) on the 26th, George and Carol Van Schaick (33rd) on the 27th, Albert and Laurinda Amaniampong (32nd) on the 3rd, and Bill and Maria Stemp (22nd) on the 5th. Our report also highlighted the **Rotary Anniversaries** of Fred Jessee (39 yrs), and Ron May (27 yrs).

Congratulations and best wishes to all!

We had 27 participants at our meeting today which included 4 **Guests**: Guest Speaker Andrea Hill, her mother Lynette Hill, her sister Erin Hill, and Bernice Bohnet. Our guests were introduced by Bruce Bohnet and welcomed with our Welcome to Rotary verse.



Anthony **thanked** Paul for being our Scribe today. He also thanked George K and Bruce for being our Greeters today, and for making everyone feel welcome. He thanked Stephen and Anne for all they do for our Club, most notably the regular production of our e-Arch. In addition we also wish to thank both Hank and Neil for operating our payment system.

### Member Minutes



Neil confirmed that our Club has agreed to work with the Rotary Club of Calgary, parking cars on three (May 10th, 11th and 20th) of the 10 days of their Annual Book Sale. We will be circulating a volunteer schedule shortly requesting our members to participate. We will be paid \$10,000 for our services which is an excellent level of payment for three days work. The Book Sale Project generates funds for the education of children.

### Rotary Foundation Update



Hank thanked all our members who have donated to the Rotary Foundation in recent years. He reported that we are looking at a disappointing situation so far this year, due to the fact that while our donation goal for the annual fund is \$10,000 and for Polio Plus \$5000, we are roughly at 50% of annual fund giving, and 20% of Polio Plus. We are hoping our members will consider making a donation to help us draw closer to our goals. These goals are similar to what they have been in recent years, and we historically have done a good job meeting or exceeding them.

Hank advised that an easy way to make donations without having to manage them is to sign up for “Rotary Direct” by which monthly donations are taken directly from your bank account. He highlighted that in the past the Foundation used an onerous system of issuing a different tax receipt for each monthly donation, however they no longer do this and are simply issuing one annual donation at year end. He advised that the TRF

### Club Business

#### Birthdays and Anniversaries

Paul G announced our birthdays for April. We have only two **member birthdays** during the month, with both Ian Burgess and Dale Perret sharing their birthday on April 1st. Our **spousal birthdays** during April are Ruth Wylie on the 1st, Patsy Steen on the 18th, and Connie Hussey on the 25th. Our **Anniversaries** for the month are Neil and Lois Beatty (58th) on April 2nd,



Committee is comprised of Hank, Paul G and John Charrett. They are planning on reaching out to previous donors and newer members so they can thank them for giving in the past, and confirming that there are no problems or issues that are preventing them for giving in the future.

## 2025 Rotary Annual Convention

Anthony asked Hank about how things were going with regard to members volunteering for next year's Rotary International Convention, being held here in Calgary. Hank responded that while you can register as a volunteer, the actual volunteer roles have yet to be finalized. Bev confirmed that she had recently been speaking with one of the leaders of the convention, who advised her that we can expect to be receiving emails asking for volunteer assistance in the near future.

## Chase the Ace

Sandy Swan won last week's draw but failed to select the Ace of Spades. The winner of today's draw was Peter Bickham who also missed picking the Ace. He won a weekly prize of \$60, the Club received \$80, and our jackpot is \$260. Next week's draw will be from a 48 card deck.



## Sunshine Report

Anthony has been attempting to confirm the residence details of where John McBean is living so anyone can visit, however he hasn't yet finalized the information.

We were also advised that our former member and good friend, Dawn Rennie, has been diagnosed with lung cancer. Further details to be provided.

It seems that Jim Thompson has injured his right ankle and is awaiting surgery once again. Jim has been mobility challenged for a long time, and our best wishes are with him for a speedy recovery.

## Guest Speaker

Bruce Bohnet introduced our guest speaker Andrea Hill, a Professional Opera Singer.

## Dates to Remember

April 25th	Evening meeting at The Point
April 30th	Lunch at the Legion for a little fellowship
May 7th	Regular Meeting at the Carriage House Speaker Dale Perret
May 10th, 11th and 20th	Book Sale volunteer opportunities
May 14th	Lunch at the Legion
May 21st	Regular Meeting at the Carriage House Speaker Jay McNeil, Stampede's Team President

Anthony thanked everyone for attending today, and asked all to stand and help close our meeting with a reading of Rotary's 4 Way Test. Remember, "Create Hope in the World". Have a great Rotary week! Our meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.

# First Nations Relationships

Indigenous culture — about residential schools for example. No one raised their hand and Cam responded, "Neither did I". He worked for the (Calgary) police for 25 years, and as part of that process, he had the opportunity to attend an Indigenous Knowledge Camp, which provided a good deal of information about the Indigenous population in our area. He asked himself "Why didn't I know this before?" Shortly thereafter he made it his mission to make a difference, and to help others do the same.

Cam was honoured with an eagle feather in a community ceremony. It guides him and he keeps it close to his heart. He also did a vision quest, and is now a pipe holder. He was given an Indigenous name and is very proud of that.

He advised that he wanted to have some fun with our group, and separated us into two teams to ask



questions regarding the Indigenous culture, just to see if we knew some relevant information. His first question was how many Indigenous people live in the province of Alberta? After much discussion, neither group got the right answer, and he announced that the proper answer is 290,000 and that this represented 16% of Canada's Indigenous population. In addition, this number is the third largest provincial Indigenous population in Canada, and he emphasized also that there are no two communities the same.

The second question was what are the First Nations that are part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Once again our group didn't do very well, and Cam advised that they were the Kainai-Blood Tribe, Siksika, Peigan-Pikani and the Aamiskapi-Pikuni.

The third question was how many Indigenous people reside in the city of Calgary, and the answer turned out to be 42,000. Cam advised that there is a common myth that Indigenous people don't pay taxes, and he assured us that all of the people who live off the reserve and are employed, pay the same taxes that we do.

His last question was what percent of Indigenous people did not complete high school? Just under 2/3rds (63%) of all First Nations youth had completed high school in the 2015/2016 school year, compared with 91% of the non-Indigenous population. First Nations youth living off reserve are much more likely to get their high school diploma (73%) than First Nations

youth living on the reserve (46%). This result is likely linked to access, as nearly half of First Nation students do not have access to high school on reserve requiring them to leave their community to pursue an education. Cam highlighted that indigenous leadership and their people are working very hard to raise their level of education.

Cam then opened up the floor for questions and was asked how can we improve our knowledge of indigenous people and develop a relationship with them. He advised that we have to understand the "truth" by asking questions and listening to the responses. The Rotary Clubs in our District are building a stronger relationship with the indigenous nations in southern Alberta, and are determined to improve these relations going forward. The District committee which Cam chairs is planning a number of projects to assist Rotarians and others to learn and understand the indigenous culture and discover what we can do to learn more and build stronger relationships.

Garth Plunkett thanked our speaker for his presentation and advised him that a donation would be made to Rotary's Polio Plus in appreciation of his participation at our meeting today.



## Personal Story of an Opera Singer



Andrea began her presentation by outlining the two questions which are most commonly asked of her. The first is "how does one get into opera singing?", and the second is "why did I move back to Calgary?". Her presentation today will basically take the form of her answering these two questions.

As a child, she loved ballet however as it turned out, ballet wasn't going to be the success she had hoped so she shifted into singing. She was seven when she sang in choir, and was 15 when she started taking singing lessons. She was always math and science oriented so the career shift into the art and culture of singing was a challenging change for her. However, when she went to the United States to get her Masters degree, she fell in love with the opera. She initially worked as a stage manager, as well as performing in the opera. She saw both sides of the industry, singing as a soloist, together with the back room areas of stage managing. She performed in the United States, however for a period of time, auditions for advancement went nowhere. However, she received a call from the Calgary Opera requesting her to join them in their emerging arts program. After that she went on to Germany for a time, where she met another choir member who turned out to be a coach for the metro opera in Paris. He talked her into taking on

an audition in Paris, which resulted in her receiving an offer of employment almost immediately. She arrived in Paris in 2007.

Andrea relates that solo singers are freelance, not unionized. You get to move around a lot. It is a rather expensive career as the common practice was that the opera employer would provide you with financial assistance to get to the location, and after that you're completely on your own financially. If you happen to get sick, then you do not get paid because you were not performing. It takes quite a while to get established financially. She reports that she is the only member of her Masters class who actually made it with a career in opera. She lived in Paris for 12 years, which gave her the opportunity to spend time in many places and countries which were nothing short of magnificent. She travelled a great deal all through Europe and she is very grateful for these opportunities.

The dark side of this career is that you were always on the move, and you always felt the need to jump on every opportunity as you never knew when such opportunities might end. She reports that in today's opera world there are many singers, however it is the directors who are now the key figures, and they have the power to choose what performances are presented and how they are presented.

There seemed to be no perfect fit. If you had it really great as a performer, then it was your personal life cont'd on page 7 ...

### Youth Service Month

May 7th  
 May 10th, 11th, 12th  
 May 21st  
 May 25th - 29th

Dale Perret — GlobalFest  
 Volunteer to help Rotary Club of Calgary with parking cars for their Annual Book Sale  
 Jay McNeil, Stampede's Team President  
 Rotary International Convention, Singapore



### Rotary Fellowships Month

June 4th

Bart Dailley — The Olympics



### Membership and New Club Development Month

August 26th - 27th

Casino fundraiser @ 'Pure Casino' in the northeast — contact Bruce Bohnet to sign up

## Personal Story of an Opera Singer

... cont'd from page 6

that paid the price. It was an extremely stressful job and Andrea learned that even the best performers in the world turned out to have very challenging lives after retirement. Many of the best performers ended up living alone and often unhappy. It was this realization that led to the answer of Andrea's second question, "why did I come back to Calgary?". As the years went by, Andrea realized that it would be good to have some family around her. Her sister who resides here in Calgary had three children and she wanted to get to know them better. She returned to Calgary four years ago, and today she's a private teacher with 25 students. She also still performs as a soloist. She stays closely connected to her career choice because it's what she knows, and she loves the challenge provided by continuing to use her voice, as well as teaching others how to use theirs. She has always considered

singing to be beautiful, and she finds teaching others to be a fascinating job.

Bev thanked Andrea for sharing her story and told her that she would be a great life coach. Bernice is an author and Bev suggested that Andrea would make a wonderful character for her next novel. Bev told Andrea that in appreciation of her presentation today, Rotary Chinook would be making a donation to Rotary's Polio Plus.



## Evening Meeting at The Point April 25th



## International Service News by Graham Boone

The \$ 3,000.00 of Casino Funds sent to Bahia de Jaltemba La Penita Rotary Club were used to purchase 125 student chairs for two schools. We received thanks from that Rotary Club, and this photo and caption.

*"Quality learning comes from a safe and comfortable environment allowing the children to focus on their learning. Chairs, tables, and bookshelves, at the right height, support proper posture, reduce discomfort, minimize distractions for both children and the teacher contributing to a positive learning experience."*

