



Dear Winnipeg HIP Colleagues,

The horrific news coming out this past weekend about the Kamloops Residential School is beyond heart-wrenching, and particularly so knowing that similar truths have and will surface across Canada. There are simply no words to describe the scale of pain and re-trauma that First Nations peoples are experiencing across the country at this moment. It is a time, once again, for serious reflection by non-Indigenous peoples and action on reconciliation from coast to coast to coast.

The flags at City Hall will be at half-mast from sunrise to sunset for four days beginning today (May 30th.), and the lights of the Winnipeg sign at The Forks will be dimmed. As HIP committee members here in Winnipeg we can use this time to reflect and to come to our next meeting on June 22nd with a renewed sense of urgency and with impactful ideas as we plan for the year ahead.

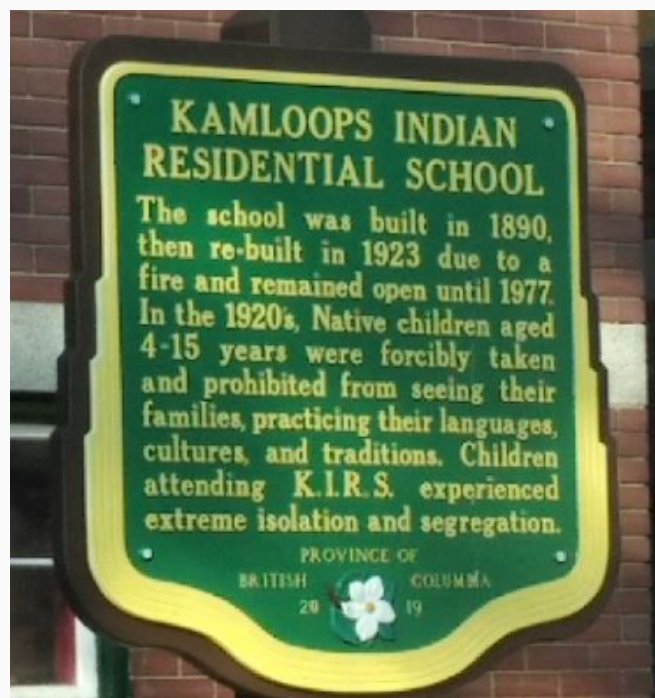
**Miigwech, Maarsii, Thank You, Merci,**

**Darren Swanson**

**Co-chair: HIP committee, Rotary Club of Winnipeg**

Remembering the **215**  
Indigenous Children  
that never made it home.

#EveryChildMatters  
#215Children



# HEALTH & WELLNESS



**Norm Podolski:** It is with sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Norman Podolski on May 5, 2021.

Norm was a long time member of our Club. He was the Coordinator of the Rotary Career Symposium for almost 20 years. He received a Paul Harris for his many years of leadership. He was involved as a Board member of YES (Youth Employment Services) which helped young people find employment.

[FOR THE FULL OBITUARY, CLICK HERE](#)

A donation may be made in Norman's memory to a charity of your choice.

## ROTARY MEMBERS



### WHY I AM A ROTARIAN

**DAN JONSSON**

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Dan emphasized the educational benefits of being a Rotarian.

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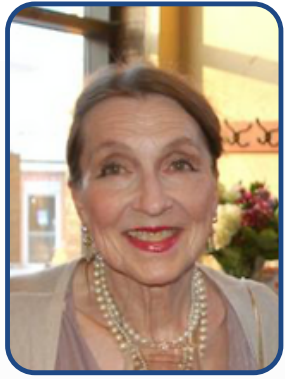
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With over twenty years as a Rotarian in two Winnipeg Rotary Clubs, I can confidently state that I'm a better person for the experience. The speakers and Rotary events bring meaningful knowledge transfer to this Rotarian. It's a journey and I am enjoying it."

Dan's comments were followed by a virtual tour of the CARSTAR head office and auto body shop at 1310 St. James St. This was the former McDonald Auto Body shop.

In an earlier newsletter, Dan had mentioned that several of the individuals involved in the sale of McDonald Auto Body and the purchase by CARSTAR were Rotarians. Two of Dan's CARSTAR partners are Rotarians.

Dan and his CARSTAR partners now own seven CARSTAR franchises in Manitoba



## WHY I AM A ROTARIAN

**SIMONE COHEN SCOTT**

✉ [SIMONESAESTHETICS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SIMONESAESTHETICS@GMAIL.COM)

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. A couple of months ago, when Strini Reddy invited me to come and tell you **why I am a member of Rotary**, I wasn't sure I knew. As Frank Cosway can tell you, as recently as last summer, I was giving some thought to quitting. Even as I began putting these remarks together, I realised I still didn't know.

You see, I feel that here at Rotary in Winnipeg, I stick out like a sore thumb. I feel that I discovered Rotary far too late in my life, and that I no longer have the stamina, or even the desire, to "make a difference". During the heyday of my adult volunteer life, I was very involved with two groups, the Business & Professional Women's Club of Winnipeg, and the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada. Women only clubs of course, but in that day Rotary Club did not welcome women members, although I was occasionally asked to speak to women's auxiliaries.

Then why, you may ask, did I join? Well, I didn't know what it would be like. You see, I first began attending Rotary in Jerusalem. A friend invited me to come hear a particular speaker. The Jerusalem Club has been meeting since 1929. It meets in the YMCA, a building which in itself has a great tradition, and a gourmet restaurant. I enjoyed the event and kept coming back for more. Every week, important speakers from somewhere in the world would be featured, while visiting members of Clubs in other countries would drop into meetings, all sharing unique perspectives I wouldn't get anywhere else.

Each year, since I usually spend the winter in Israel, I would attend Rotary meetings in Jerusalem. I became so very impressed with the scope of Rotary, of its great work going on everywhere in the world, that when friends there suggested I join a Club here, I thought it would be a good fit. So I did. And the next year I took the Winnipeg Club's emblem with me to Jerusalem, and brought back to Winnipeg the Jerusalem Club's emblem. That year we visited the Paul Harris Peace Forrest, so named in honour of the man who in 1905 founded Rotary, and where there is a stone wall of plaques commemorating all the presidents of Rotary International. I wrote that event up and sent pictures, which Frank ran in the newsletter. Btw, in lieu of an honorarium, Jerusalem Club plants a tree in the Paul Harris Peace Forest, in each speaker's name.

The Winnipeg Club was much different. I've identified four elements. The 'old boys', who are almost my contemporaries, have been members since who knows how long, and have bonded together like Gorilla Glue. Imagine them as young men, enthusiastically networking with each other, putting their shoulders to the wheel of joint projects, while at the same time building their careers, making jokes, and becoming able to reach into deep pockets, putting their money where their mouth is.

The recent element is the young people, from a much broader geographic location than the other, enjoying the aura of this prestigious club, joining each other in projects, struggling to fit in, and at the same time build their careers. They would do well to emulate the elders, become as bonded, and grow to love each other as much.

Bridging the middle between these two groups are the intermediaries, comprising the other men, the ones in mid-career, realising they can now take a longer lunch and enjoy the camaraderie as they network. And the women who broke the ice, once again proving themselves up to the task. (Women have always done this service work, with or without the company of men.)

Before I joined, I researched the Winnipeg Club and when I learned it was the one that made Rotary international, back in 1912 when it was founded, there was no stopping me. I looked up Sid Ritter, phoned him, told him my story. He introduced me to Cynthia Bricks of blessed memory, whom I immediately loved. I wanted to become best friends with her, but alas, she left the planet too quickly. Now though, we have her daughter Marsha, of whom I've grown very fond. Hey, it seems I have a history here of sorts, and that even though I no longer have the "chops" to participate much, I really enjoy watching the passing parade. So there you have it. Thank you.



## NEW MEMBER



### GIGU GEORGE

✉ [GIJUGEORGEPHD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:GIJUGEORGEPHD@GMAIL.COM)

Giju was born in Abu Dhabi and educated in India, Russia, U.K., U.S.A. and Canada. He moved to Canada in 2010.

Giju's background is in Public Health. He has worked hard to reach communities on issues relating from heart disease to cervical cancer.

He is currently working for the Government of Manitoba Justice, clerical role and MacDonald Youth Services and Marymouth, working with youth in care.

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Giju is passionate about working with youth, being a role model, and encouraging them to complete their education. With grade 12 math and English, even a job at McDonalds will be hard to find.

Soccer is his weakness and living in England increased his fondness. He tells his wife, "When Chelsea plays, my whole world stops and if they lose, please don't ask me to do anything."

Giju grew up with Rotary as his dad used to be part of Rotary in India back in the 80's.

Giju volunteers with Red Cross, however with Covid, there are fewer volunteer opportunities.





## **ABBIE BAJON**

✉ [ABAJON@CORYDONCC.COM](mailto:ABAJON@CORYDONCC.COM)

Abbie was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her father, Zaz, was a long time Rotary member and has always made it known how much of an impact it had on his life.

Abbie graduated from high school in 2001 and graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Science. While in university, she worked at Crescentwood Community Centre running camps, family programs and working as the Assistant General Manager. A few years later she took on the

position of General Manager at the Sir John Franklin Community Centre.

In 2011, Crescentwood, River Heights and Sir John Franklin Community Centres amalgamated to become Corydon Community Centre. She worked as the Manager of Program Services, Assistant General Manager and then General Manager. She has worn many hats and has a passion for youth sport and recreation. She believes that every child should be able to participate and she advocates every day to keep sport and recreation accessible to all families.

Abbie grew up playing many sports but the one that took her heart was 4 wall handball. The sport enabled her to travel all over Canada and the United States. She is actively involved in the Manitoba Handball and Canadian Handball Associations. Abbie enjoys being active, spending time at the lake whenever possible and trying to appreciate every moment in life.

In 2019, Abbie and her father travelled to Europe to see the small town of Freyla, Germany where he was born. Her dad contacted the Rotary Club in Minden, Germany and they were amazing in helping them plan their trip. They were greeted at the train station, taken to their hotel and out for dinner and shown around their beautiful city. They did research and found the hospital where Zaz was born, the church he was christened in, as well as the house his parents would have lived in. There were several amazing members who made their experience unforgettable and who still stay in touch with her dad today.

Abbie is honored to be a member of the Winnipeg Rotary Club and is very excited to learn all that there is to learn.

**DONNA ALEXANDER** [DONNAAKEXANDERBH@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DONNAAKEXANDERBH@GMAIL.COM)

Donna was Co-Chair of the recent MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly). A MUNA Report will follow in the next issue of the Newsletter.

But Donna is also involved as a volunteer working with recently arrived Yazidi families, from northern Iraq. Read her report below.

*In 2018, I answered the call for volunteers made by Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (Welcome Place). They were looking for Manitobans who would be kind and helpful to refugee arrivals. The story of the Syrian refugees was in the news so much at the time, and I felt I should do something. About a month later, after attending a short workshop on how to help, I was paired not with a Syrian family but with a Yazidi family (parents, four children) that had escaped the ISIS led genocide in Mosul, Iraq. I met with them weekly for the first year, helping arrange doctor appointments, picking up household items at the thrift stores liaising with school personnel but mostly just being kind and dropping by with slurpies and heading to the playground. I soon learned that they had three other children, stranded in Germany. In 2014 when the family fled ISIS into the mountains, three children aged 9, 12, and 16 had gone ahead with other neighbours, because their mom and dad were moving more slowly with toddlers and a newborn infant. Those children made the perilous trek across the Mediterranean Sea and ended up in Germany.*



**Donna, Fani Zndnan (mother), Khaleel Zndnan (father) and Bewar (their son)**

*Their initial application to have their children join them in Canada was denied. With the help of MLT Aikins we applied again on humanitarian grounds and were buoyed last year, when the Canadian government said Yazidi reunification would be a priority. Again this year, we have read in the paper, that the Yazidi people are still a priority group, but unfortunately we still have not heard any good news. We still have to submit DNA but cannot because due to COVID labs and embassies do not have that as a priority. So we continue to wait. That nine year old girl from 2014 is now 16.*

*Today, I continue to advocate for this family and for other Yazidi families who have come to know me. Nasih wants his wife here. He has struggled to find employment during COVID and still struggles with the grief of knowing his younger brother was rounded up by ISIS from his high school and is now presumed dead. Nasih's father is also missing. Nasih lives in a small three bedroom apartment with his mother, and six other family members. He has worked at Ramallah Cafe, Applebees, and as a cleaner through a placement agency. He set up his own snow clearing business, and this summer hopes to do lawn care. We work together every few weeks to identify new job opportunities and send in the applications and resumes, but now is a difficult time to be an immigrant in search of work.*

*My first family has an 19 year old daughter Mahkuma and I set her up with a friend's daughter at UBC. They Skype and FaceTime and have built a friendship. My grandchildren know the younger kids and miss the playdates we had with them pre-COVID. Luckily, we have technology and I get text messages all the time with queries such as "Is this a real bill?" or "What do you think of this?" We have maintained the first garden that many of you might remember from a few years ago, and are still hoping for another garden plot for the second family.*

*We are all waiting patiently for the day that we can sit together, break bread and share stories again.*

*So although I will no longer be with the MUNA committee in the months ahead, I will continue my commitment to service above self. We have goals together: finding work for Nasih and Mahkuma, bringing the children from Germany, getting Nasih's wife here, and ensuring our families know each other's stories.*

**REMEMBER!**

Our Club is on social media, please follow us and find out the latest news.  
click on the logos to see our accounts!

facebook



Instagram



YouTube

LinkedIn



## AL HOEFT

✉ [AL.HOEFT@SALVATIONARMY.CA](mailto:AL.HOEFT@SALVATIONARMY.CA)

Al is a former member of our Club and still an active Rotarian. Al and his wife Karen are both Officers with the Salvation Army. Al sent a update.

*Majors Al and Karen Hoeft are on the move again!*

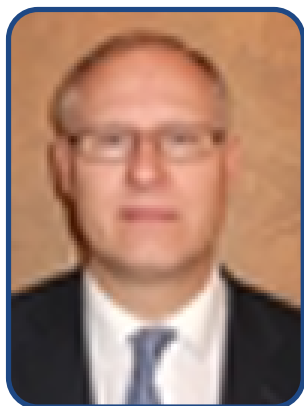
*Former member of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg (Al) and former president of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg North (Karen) left Winnipeg*

*in 2012 and since then have served as Area Commanders in British Columbia North (Prince George) and Ontario North (Sudbury) and are currently living in Edmonton where Al is the Divisional Secretary for Public Relations and Karen is the Corps Officer at the Edmonton Crossroads Community Church. During these years Al has continued his Rotary involvement with the Rotary Clubs of Prince George Yellowhead, Sudbury, and Edmonton.*

*This summer will see them moving to Regina (their home town) and taking up shared roles as the Executive Directors of The Salvation Army's Waterston Centre as well as Regional Public Relations Officers. They are excited to be heading to Regina, with the added bonus that it is only a short drive to visit their children and grandchildren, as well as all their Rotary friends, in Winnipeg.*

*While Al is sad to be leaving his friends at the Rotary Club of Edmonton, where he has been serving on the Board as well as acting as chair of the membership and youth services committees, he looks forward to finding a new Rotary Club to join once they arrive in Regina.*

*Al and Karen are looking forward to their new roles, and invite you all to visit anytime the Bombers travel to Winnipeg to face the feared and ferocious Roughriders!*



## HENRY TRAA

✉ [HENRYTRAA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HENRYTRAA@GMAIL.COM)

Henry is another former member of our Club. He moved to BC 5 years ago. Henry was the Organizer of our first Annual RIBFEST at the Forks, in 2015. Below is a recent update from Henry.

*Sorry that the office is going to close. It has been there for such a long time and is part of the convention centre. My wife Jill and I are enjoying living in Saanichton. Covid has been tough for us to visit our kids, but hopefully this summer.*

*We have been helping my parents as they require some attention now. They are very happy that we are close to them.*

*Now that I learned how to go Crabbing, it's now time to figure out how to get some of those shrimp out of the ocean. Haven't caught a salmon yet, did catch some halibut, but nothing taste as good as our walleye.*

*Keep well, please say hello to anyone who would remember me.*



## TAMIL HERITAGE

THE FOLLOWING REPORT WAS SUBMITTED BY RANY JEYARATNAM  
FOR ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH.

*It is my pleasure to explore a little bit about the Tamil language in this Asian Heritage month of May. Tamil is one of the few existing, classical languages and has an unbroken literary history of over a few thousand years. It is not an easy task to break down the vast historical and ethical information of Tamil, within a few hundred words. However, I as a native Tamilian and living in Canada for more than four decades, would like to share some general information with the non-Tamil readers of this article.*

*Tamil is natively spoken in Tamil Eelam (North part of Sri Lanka), Tamil Nadu (South of India), Sri Lankan Moors. Moreover, it is also spoken by significant minorities of a few states in India such as Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In addition to this, in India, Tamil is one of 23 nationally recognized Official Languages. Furthermore, Tamil is the first legally recognized classical language.*

*However, if someone says that the Tamil could consider being one of the world common language. Then it is not a surprise news to the Tamilians, because Tamil is not only spoken in Sri Lank and India but Tamil is also spoken by approximately 74 million of the Tamil people around the world. Including; Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Mauritius. In addition, Tamil carries an international status as one of the official languages of Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa and Mauritius.*

*By proclaiming the month of January as Tamil Heritage Month, it is an important month for Tamil Canadians to celebrate the Tamil Harvest Festival, Thai Pongal, preparing sweet-rice and offering it to the Sun and pray. The richness of the Tamil language and culture and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations. This year, there were cultural performance held virtually to encourage the youngsters.*

*Tamils began migrating to Canada as early as the 1940s, which accelerated during the civil war in July 1983. Approximately, 200,000 Tamils of Sri-Lankan descent are living in Canada, mainly in Greater Toronto area. Canada recognizes the valuable contributions that Tamil Canadians have made to Canadian's social, economic, political and cultural fabric. Tamil Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Tamil Canadians have played and continue to play in Canadian communities.*

*Beside the above, some interesting points in Tamil history below:*

- *A recorded, Tamil literature has been documented for over 2000 years.*
- *The earliest existing text in Tamil is the Tolkāppiyam.*
- *More than 55% of the epigraphical inscriptions (about 55,000) found by the Archaeological Survey of India are in the Tamil language.*
- *Tamil language inscriptions written in Brahmi script have been discovered in Sri Lanka and on trade goods in Thailand and Egypt*
- *The two earliest manuscripts from India, acknowledged and registered by the UNESCO Memory of the World register in 1997 and 2005, were written in Tamil.*

*Tamil isn't the only language exciting with history and tradition, all the languages in this universe are treasures too. I hope we will get a chance to get to know more about them in this Asian Heritage*

**[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE  
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA WEBSITE -  
ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH](#)**



SUBMITTED BY  
**RANY JEYARATNAM**



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## [DEBUNKING THE MYTH THAT ALL FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE RECEIVE FREE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION](#)

I first saw reference to this article in a recent issue of West Wind, the weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg West.

Nancy and I have long been aware of this reality. We have two granddaughters who are from the Sandy Bay First Nation. We have established an RESP (Registered Education Saving Plan) for these two granddaughters to ensure that they will be able to attend post-secondary education when they are ready.



## [HISTORY OF WOMEN IN ROTARY.](#)

Thirty four (34) years ago, on May 8, 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Rotary Clubs may not exclude women from membership on the basis of gender.

### **CHANNELS RECOMENDED**



[ROTARY CLUB OF WINNIPEG](#)



[ROTARY DISTRICT 5550](#)

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