



# The Fortarian

Aug 17, 2022

Rotary Club of Thunder Bay (Fort William)

## 2022/2023 Board of Directors

President: Fhara Pottinger  
 Secretary: Stephen Margarit  
 Assistant Secretary: Cindy Levanto  
 Treasurer: Dawn Sebasta  
 President Elect: Irene Sottile  
 Past President: Dawn Sebasta  
 Meets: 3rd Tuesday of each month,  
 Zoom: 6.30pm

## Website [www.fwrotary.ca](http://www.fwrotary.ca)

Directors:  
 Irene Sottile  
 Robert Moore  
 Sante Sottile  
 Bev Knutson  
 Stephen Margarit  
 Mary Ann Breton

## Allocations Committee

Chair: Bob Hookham  
 Meets: 2nd Tuesday of each month,  
 Zoom 12 noon.

## Rotary House Lottery Committee

Chair: Dave Knutson  
 Meets: 1st Tuesday of each month,  
 Zoom 12 noon.

## Semi-monthly Zoom Meetings

Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.  
 Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday

## Mailing Address

PO Box 10061  
 Thunder Bay, ON  
 Canada P7B 6T6

## Newsletter Editors

Erle Wheatley & Brian Phillips

**THE FORTARIAN**  
**Aug 17, 2022**

President Fhara chaired the hybrid meeting. As this was the visit of the District governor, Kay Biga, there were a number of guests in attendance. These included visiting Rotarians Jan Biga and Dan Brown as well as guests Mark Breton, Jan Wheatley and Gilles Grondin.



Joan Krisko played both the American and Canadian National anthems.

Irene Sottile proposed toasts to the office of the President of the United States and to the Queen of Canada.

Mary Ann Breton acknowledged that the meeting was being conducted on the traditional lands of the Indigenous people of this region.

Presentation:

President Fhara introduced the District 5580 Governor Kay Biga to the Club and provided some biographical information. Kay Biga is a Business Attorney based in Duluth. She has also worked as an Associate Professor, lecturing on Business Law and Management, at the University of Wisconsin-Superior in the past. Kay has been a Rotarian since 1996 and, in 2008 she founded the Duluth Superior Eco Rotary club. After serving in various leadership roles, including Club President, the “District Women in Rotary” project and Assistant District Governor, Kay became the 2022/23 District Governor.



District Governor Biga thanked Fhara and presented her with the 2022/23 Rotary International Presidential banner depicting RI President Jennifer Jones' Presidential theme "Imagine Rotary".

District Governor Biga began her presentation by explaining that the District had suffered a decline in District membership, with the largest declines occurring in the larger Clubs, she went on to say that she had heard wonderful things about the Fort William Club, notably the success of the House Lottery.

Fort William Rotary was the 20<sup>th</sup> Club that she had visited and that one of her goals was to bring back the good ideas she heard or observed in each Club visited. She reflected that of our 36 club members, 40% were women, which is fairly high in comparison to historic levels within the organization.

Rotary Clubs need to ensure they are pursuing diversity, equity and inclusion. This means openness to all persons who share or reflect the values of Rotary, independent of sex, race or other social determinants.

She related stories about Clubs she had visited around the world, reflecting on one traditional Club with no female members which behaved in a manner that was intimidating or unwelcoming to women, one of which used financial and marital status as a determinant of acceptable membership and one in which singing played an important role. She noted that these Clubs illustrated the flexibility within Rotary to create different types of Club all supporting the ideals of Rotary. However, if the organization is to grow, rather than contract, then Clubs needed to accept that change, although hard, was necessary.

District Governor Biga continued this discussion by outlining some new club models, such as:

- Eco Club in Duluth, focused on ecological/environmental challenges

- A club comprised of Military Veterans,
- A club concentrating on combatting Human Trafficking and
- A club focused on empowering women

Some of District Governor Biga's goals include:

Public Image –raising the public awareness of Rotary in the District using the various media tool website, social media, newspapers, etc. The District has funding available to assist in these initiatives. To date this funding support has been under-utilized. (Stephen Margarit is the Public Image Chair for the District)

Membership –attracting new Rotarians, asking all Rotarians in the District to use there personal networks to identify those who share Rotary's ideals and being prepared to “make the ask” to invite new members. (Mark Leutgeb (Duluth) is the District Membership Chair).

Foundation –Increasing Paul Harris Fellow and not stopping the pressure on ending polio now

The District Governor relayed a few key events that Rotarians would want to note:

- Dragon Boat Festival –Duluth August 26-27, 2022
- North Star Zone Institute September 15-18, Mall of America see: <https://zones25b-29.org/sitepage/2022-zone-institute/2022-north-star-zone>
- District Conference –April 29, 2023, a one-day event at Madden's resort in Brainerd, MN.
- RYLA 2023 –July 9-15, 2023

At this point District Governor Biga opened the floor to questions:

In response to a question as to how Covid impacted the District, she outlined that making Zoom available to all Clubs had been beneficial to many and that the implementation of hybrid meeting was positive and that she recommended keeping them.

Why did she leave Rotary for 3 years? She had started with a club that was dismissive of women in leadership positions. As leadership opportunities were effectively barred, she left and started the Eco Club to remain in Rotary but in a more positive environment.

Does Rotary have a hard time attracting young people? In the District Governor's opinion it does not. Both of her children are engaged Rotarians, With younger members there must be a realization that their time is limited but that they too will be able to take on additional roles as their families grow up. Regarding the time availability, Clubs must be careful not to "turn off" potential members by establishing unreasonable levels of engagement in order that the younger Rotarian be seen as "pulling their weight". Accept the effort they can afford to put into the Club at this time in their life and keep them engaged with Rotary.

With the end of questions, District Governor Biga expressed her thanks for the Club's invitation.

President Fhara thanked the District Governor for her presentation and presented her with a piece of local pottery for use in her gardening.

#### Announcements:

Assistant District Governor Dan Brown announced that the Nipigon Club would be conducting a Polio Fundraiser on Saturday October 22, 2022 at the Nipigon Legion. The 50/50 draw would be run again this year with tickets selling at \$30. More information will be provided as the event approaches.

#### Fines:

Irene Sottile acted as Fine master and was successful in extracting funds based on "Good news".

Meeting Adjourned.

Scribe: Dave Knutson

## RYLA 2023 | July 9 - 15

**What:**

RYLA is a leadership immersion experience for incoming high school seniors & juniors

**So What:**

Clubs like you have sponsored over 2,000 students to attend! Only \$500/student!

**Now What:**

Start planning now for sponsorship and identifying students. Applications open on January 1. Work with youth program leaders in your school (coaches, choir directors, NHS leads, ect.)

*"Camp RYLA was an experience I will truly never forget. It changed me in so many positive ways and I met so many wonderful people with such bright futures. If you ever get the opportunity to go, I strongly encourage you to do so."*



**Editor Erle**



**Scribe Dave**



**IMAGINE  
ROTARY**