



The Fortarian

February 28, 2024

Rotary Club of Thunder Bay (Fort William)

2022/2023 Board of Directors

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

Website www.fwrotary.ca

Directors:
 Therese Lim
 Cindy Levanto
 Joseph Osei Ababio
 Dave 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

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Newsletter Editors

Erle Wheatley & Brian Phillips

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President Irene Sottile opened the meeting. After the singing of O Canada, the Toast to the King was proposed by Cynthia Judge and the Land Accord was read by Mary Ann Breton. Mary Ann then introduced her son, Mark Breton, an Honourary Member of our club, and Mandi O'Connor introduced a prospective new member.

Our presentation this evening was from Diversity Thunder Bay and the two speakers were introduced by Therese Lim. Brenda Reimer was one of the original members of Diversity Thunder Bay. She studied in New York, taught in England and in China. She was previously the Executive Director of Lakehead Social Planning Council, and through her church has worked with refugee sponsorship. She is grateful that her path has led to a greater understanding and appreciation of many cultures and most particularly First Nations peoples and their true role in Canada's history.

Evelina Pan's activism began when she joined the Congress for Racial Equality while in University. She continued her commitment to social justice by participating in the labour movement, where she was president of the Thunder Bay and District Labour Council for 12 years.

Brenda and Evelina told us that they would be sharing some ideas around the positive values of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Brenda said that true diversity means that we all see ourselves reflected in our community so that no one feels "othered" and there is not a strong sense of "us" and "them". Barriers to equity are found in many places - physical barriers; barriers imbedded in policies and procedures; and barriers created because of our assumptions. As we become aware of barriers we try to make accommodations and this is an important first

step. However when the barrier is removed completely equity is achieved. Inclusion comes as barriers come down. Everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging which occurs when we listen of other peoples' stories and share our own, and when we are respectful of everyone.

Our guests discussed the changing face of Thunder Bay, marginalization, the history of our First Nations, and other minority groups. To value and celebrate diversity is to change the norm. It is no longer a matter of new faces adapting to the mainstream, but that the mainstream is changing.

Evelina stressed that seeing biases and then naming them is essential. Brenda noted that as Diversity Thunder Bay works towards its goal of building community three pillars have emerged - Education, Co-operation and Collaboration, and Youth.

Evelina finished with a quote from Murray Sinclair:-

"The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek.

There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation, we are forced to go the distance."

Brenda and Evelina closed with an invitation to us to attend the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Date: March 21st

Time: 12 - 1:30

Place: Courthouse Hotel, or Zoom

Speaker: Cadmus Delorme, Chief of the Cowessess FN, Saulteaux Cree

Topic: What we all inherited and what steps and actions we all must take to ensure we get it right this time.

President Irene thanked the speakers.

Fhara officiated for the fines.

Cindy lightened the mood with the Lighter Side (with some assistance from Bob Hookham).

Meeting adjourned.

Editor Brian

Scribe Cynthia

Photos Irene

Theme 2023-2024

