



# CENTENNIAL BEAT

MARCH 2012

## MEETINGS AND SPEAKERS

Dear Readers,

*This is the third issue of the Centennial Beat, a monthly addition to the VOICE leading up to the start of our Club's Centennial Year on July 1, 2012. The Centennial Beat will highlight membership involvement over the past 100 years in projects and activities in our areas of service.*

*Rotary was founded as a business networking group but rapidly expanded to creating fellowship among members. This led to great activity and the motto "They profit most who serve best." Much of the information in the Centennial Beat will come from These Were The Days: The Story of The Rotary Club of Toronto from 1912 to 1999; for this book we thank members John MacDonald, John Austin, Frank Strickland, Don Armitage, John Talman and George Richardson, and past members Don Patterson, Blake Moore and Al Martin. Other sources will be the Club's VOICE collection from 1918 and members' recollections.*

*Enjoy.*

*John Andras*

**On October 12, 1928** Rotary International founder Paul Harris led our members in prayer: "That Rotary should be the haven where, regardless of politics, race or religious beliefs, men might find a common ground on which to work for the betterment of mankind." Note that women did not become full members of our Club until 1988. Another special meeting, held on February 22, 1957, honoured long time member Wat McLean (Uncle Wat) on his 90th birthday. He entered the Concert Hall of the Royal York Hotel on a white charger and paraded around the meeting room before dismounting at the head table! Not to be out done, he was elected an Honorary Member and the Club's first and only President Emeritus.



Rotarian Wat McLean arrives for Club meeting

**In the 1930s** through 1950s speakers were drawn from the worlds of entertainment (Rudy Vallee, Johnny Wayne), sports (King Clancy, Foster Hewett, Conn Smythe), and politics (George Drew, Roland Michener). Joey Smallwood pled the case for Newfoundland to become Canada's tenth province. John G. Diefenbaker made our meeting a campaign stop in his bid to become the leader of the Conservative Party. Prince Phillip graced our head table on two occasions – in 1952 and 1969.



President John McDonald and HRH Prince Philip

**In the 1960s** through 1970s speakers at our weekly Club meetings included Victor Borge, The Mills Brothers, Clint Eastwood, Alfred Hitchcock, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, and Sir Edmund Hillary. When the new Canadian flag was unveiled on February 18, 1965, our President Murray Bosley requested at a Club meeting that members have a "mature and positive attitude on the subject." In July 1968, "Oh Canada" replaced "God Save the Queen" as the anthem we sing to open our Friday meetings.



Former Prime Minister Trudeau with President Ernie Carr

## FRIDAY MEANS ROTARY!

At the heart of each Rotary club is the weekly meeting. For members it is the glue that binds. It is an opportunity to renew friendships, work on projects, and enjoy a speaker who will typically illuminate the membership on important issues of the day.

### In the Beginning

**The first meeting** of what was to become The Rotary Club of Toronto took place at the King Edward Hotel on November 28th, 1912. It was determined that there would be an entrance fee for new members of \$15.00 with semi-annual dues of \$5.00. Known as Club #55, the fledgling club became an affiliate of the International Association of Rotary Clubs in April 1913. Weekly lunches were held at McConkey's Restaurant at 29 King Street West and members were charged 60 cents, which included 10 cents towards an "entertainment fund." In 1919, meetings moved to the King Edward Hotel. In July 1929 the Club settled into our current home at the Royal York Hotel (now The Fairmont Royal York Hotel).



McConkey's Restaurant

In the early years most speakers were members giving "Classification Speeches" about their businesses. A notable exception was the appearance of Sir Harry Lauder, a Rotarian, promoting Victory Bonds during the First World War. Members and guests signed up for over \$700,000.00!

# CENTENNIAL BEAT

*"The Rotary Club of Toronto provides a premier, unparalleled venue for a wide range of speakers to make an impact – whether they represent the arts, business, politics, sciences, religion or community services. Our Club's members look forward to each Friday's program as an opportunity to be inspired, challenged, and educated on a wide range of topics. Ideas presented at Friday lunches and special forums often evolve into projects that serve our local and international communities."*

*John Andras, Past President (2003)*

## Modern Times

**Politicians from all leanings** have promoted their agendas from our lectern. As former Mayor Mel Lastman pronounced, "Who does it better than Rotary? NoooooBody!" Mike Harris introduced us to the "Common Sense Revolution" on May 26, 1995. Future Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Scott Bryson, and Peter McKay made campaign stops while running for the leadership of the combined Alliance/Progressive Conservative Parties in 2004. Pierre Trudeau, Robert Stanfield, Joe Clark, Paul Martin Jr., Kim Campbell, Elizabeth May, and our former member Jack Layton all made notable presentations.

**Over 1,000 Rotarians and guests** were inspired and deeply moved by Stephen Lewis at a 2003 meeting as he described the plight of people living with AIDS in Africa, especially the 13 million left orphaned by the pandemic. With raised awareness, Club members looked for ways to help, leading to the combined support of over \$1,000,000.00 for Dignitas International's work in Malawi.

This meeting also led to the creation of "The Power of Rotary" luncheon meetings that have brought to our lectern headline presenters Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire and the brothers Craig and Mark Kielburger, founders of Free the Children and Me to We.



Roméo Dallaire



Stephen Lewis



Marc and Craig Kielburger



Dr. Roberta Bondar



Raheel Raza



James Bartleman



Ravi Ravindran



Dr. Mak Tak



Photo: Mario Voltolina

## MOVING FORWARD

**How will you get involved?**  
2012-2013

### Sign Up

**Propose a speaker!**

**Join the Program Committee!**

Contact: [peter.simmie@bristolgate.com](mailto:peter.simmie@bristolgate.com)

**Come Fridays at 12:15 PM!**

**Guests are always welcome!**

**For program news, go to**

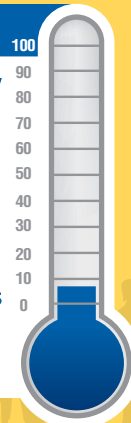
- Friday lunch meetings
  - The VOICE
- [www.rotarytoronto.com](http://www.rotarytoronto.com)
- Email [office@rotarytoronto.ca](mailto:office@rotarytoronto.ca)

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## CENTENNIAL MEMBERSHIP GOAL

"I was introduced to The Rotary Club by Bill Empey at the Power of Rotary luncheon with General Roméo Dallaire. Dallaire spoke of the challenges faced by the armed services when operating in theatres involving child soldiers and the circumstances he faced in Rwanda. I remember the large crowd and the challenging speech. Our speakers open us to new problems, new thoughts, new solutions... It is an unusual meeting that I don't report a speaker's comments to another person. The topics are broad enough to get you beyond your specific business interest. The speakers are sufficiently well established to encourage you to bring guests – they won't be disappointed."

*Peter Simmie, new member in 2009, Chair of Program Committee*



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