

July 2024 / Juillet 2024

Rotary

CANADA 



VIEW FROM THE NORTH

A girl's dream

The narrator of Alice Munro's short story "Boys and Girls" doesn't have a name. She's an 11-year-old girl whose father raises silver foxes outside a small town in southwestern Ontario, just as Munro's father did for a time. The town in the story does have a name — Jubilee — and it's presumably a stand-in for Wingham, the town, about 35 kilometres east of Lake Huron, where Munro was born and spent her childhood.

On the Rotary map, that's District 6330, home today to about 60 clubs. I mention that because our nameless narrator would have appreciated Rotary. Growing up in rural Ontario in the 1940s, she is more and more relegated to roles traditionally assigned to women. She is, as she's reminded, "only a girl."

Yet she's a girl who aspires to accomplish great things. As she drifts off to sleep each night, she imagines stories where she's a little older and undeniably heroic. Those stories, the narrator explains, "took place in a world that was recognizably mine, yet one that presented opportunities for courage, boldness, and self-sacrifice, as mine never did."

Munro, who died on 13 May, did escape that confining life and accomplished great things, including winning the Nobel Prize in literature in 2013. But she always returned to that world in her stories. "I loved the sound of my own voice, frail and supplicating, rising in the dark," says our narrator, recalling how she sang aloud in bed at night. Who did she hope was listening? Someone who could empower her — someone like Rotary.

Geoffrey Johnson

Executive editor, *Rotary Canada*

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the sunrise over Sandy Point paints sea and sky in exquisite shades of blue and gold.

On the cover:
On a lazy summer day in the Lanaudière region of Quebec, three fishing boats await the arrival of a few pêcheurs passionnés.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (COVER) GETTY IMAGES; (THIS PAGE) MICHAEL GOODYEAR



FIELD NOTES

Paddling together

An oceangoing canoe launches students toward a better understanding of First Nations culture

On a sunny day in September 2022, Blake Cowan and I, members of the Rotary Club of Tsawwassen (Delta) in British Columbia, headed out on the water. We were coursing along the Fraser River as we paddled on the inaugural journey of *Wave Warrior*, a 39-foot-long oceangoing fibreglass canoe designed by members of our local First Nations community.

Like many other Canadians, our Rotary club has been working towards Truth and Reconciliation with First Nations members. In our case, we have been closely involved for the past several years with the Tsawwassen people; our efforts included honouring two of their members with our Peacebuilder award in a ceremony in 2021. Because one of the Tsawwassen members, Nathan Wilson, was part of the local Delta School District's Indigenous education program, many other teachers attended the ceremony.

I got to talking to one of the Delta teachers and learned they wanted to purchase a fibreglass canoe for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to take on field trips. The theme would be "Paddling Together." As our club's community service director, I brought a proposal to the board, which was unanimously approved. The club applied for a district grant and was able to help buy the canoe. As Blake explains, "The *Wave Warrior* project is a perfect fit with our club's desire to advance from learning about reconciliation to taking action."

Because of all this, Blake and I got to participate in

Wave Warrior's first paddling journey. The canoe has a Rotary emblem on the stern, and it also incorporates elements of Coast Salish designs used by Indigenous people in British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington state. *Wave Warrior* will help non-Indigenous students learn more about canoe culture and connect them with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. In addition, the Delta district's Indigenous Education Department has been developing a mentorship program, also called Paddling Together, for students in grades 5 to 12.

When you get in a canoe, you leave your stresses behind. You enjoy nature, become better acquainted with your companions, and pull each other forward. Blake and I were honoured to have been part of the inaugural journey. As we concentrated on paddling, we enjoyed the beautiful river with our fellow paddlers. There were 18 of us, plus our lead stern person. We started off out of sync ("caterpillar stroke"), but our First Nation leader, Nathan, seated in the stern, soon had us all "paddling together."

The canoe became a symbol to our club of ways to support the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

What's more, in Blake's year as club president (2022-23), we were finally returning to full in-person meetings after the COVID-19 pandemic. Blake used the "paddling together" analogy many times throughout the year to help club members understand we had to work together to regain our momentum. This created a buzz in the room from energized and enthusiastic Rotarians. We also took some innovative steps, such as when we were hosted on Tsawwassen First Nation lands for one of our meetings. As a result of this and other outreach initiatives, we now have our first Tsawwassen member.

Wave Warrior has become an integral part of the Delta School District's Indigenous education program, and if it helps students paddle together and share their stories, histories, and cultures, we will get to Truth and Reconciliation. This initiative has been a superb example of the difference Rotary members can make in the world, and it has been one of the highlights of my and Blake's Rotary journey.

— TOM SMITH

↑
Embellished with Coast Salish designs, the *Wave Warrior* moves swiftly along the Fraser River on its maiden voyage.



FEATURE

To do good in the world

The mission of The Rotary Foundation (Canada) — and the role of Rotary members in helping to accomplish it

The Rotary Foundation (Canada) is a federally chartered corporation and Canadian-registered charity supported by voluntary contributions from members of Rotary and friends of The Rotary Foundation who share its vision of a better world. Like The Rotary Foundation, TRF (Canada) has as its mission a desire to enable Rotary members to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education, and the alleviation of poverty.

There are numerous ways to support TRF (Canada) — and every contribution is spent in support of humanitarian, educational, and cultural projects that make a difference worldwide. That money can, for instance, buy textbooks for a school in Zambia, fund a two-year graduate program for a Rotary Peace Fellow, or immunize thousands of children against polio. In the words of Arch C. Klumph, who in 1917 laid the groundwork for what would become The Rotary Foundation, your generous donation can help TRF (Canada) accomplish its goal of “doing good in the world.”

To learn more about The Rotary Foundation (Canada), including ways to make a donation, go to trfcanada.org.

A conversation with Eva Vida, president and executive chair of The Rotary Foundation (Canada)

An exceptionally active member of Rotary since 1992, Eva Vida is currently a member of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg. A past governor of District 5550 (2011-12), she has held several other positions within the district, including Foundation chair, international service chair, and community service chair. She has also served as a regional Rotary Foundation coordinator. She began her term as president of TRF (Canada) in December 2023.

A graduate of the University of Manitoba, Vida has worked in the finance sector her entire career, with roles in banking and management and as a certified financial planner. All that makes her well-qualified to serve as president and executive chair of TRF (Canada), where she has been a longtime member of the board.

Can you explain what an associate foundation is, especially with regards to The Rotary Foundation (Canada)?

An associate Rotary Foundation is approved by the Trustees of The Rotary

Foundation. Each of the associate foundations around the world is governed by its country's laws. The Rotary Foundation (Canada) is a separate legal entity and a registered charity in Canada. It is governed by Canadian tax and charity laws with a mandate to provide tax-related benefits to Canadian donors. We also work for Canadian



A member of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg and a past district governor, Eva Vida is eminently qualified to lead The Rotary Foundation (Canada) from her career in finance and banking.

Rotary members by enhancing services and support to the Foundation programs provided by Rotary.

What do you see as the primary role of TRF (Canada)?

Our mandate is to exercise stewardship over the contributions of Canadian donors and to ensure compliance with Canadian Revenue Agency rules to ensure that we can continue to provide tax-related benefits to Rotary members and supporters of TRF (Canada).

What is the most misunderstood part of TRF (Canada)?

It's the misunderstanding that TRF (Canada) has a direct impact on or involvement with the management of Canadian Rotary and Rotaract clubs. Clubs are semiautonomous, and each manages its own affairs. We do not direct clubs. In addition, the role of TRF (Canada) is not only to issue tax receipts. We manage endowment funds gifted to TRF (Canada) by Rotary members and Rotary supporters. We also manage donations to the Annual Fund and to PolioPlus, and we fund global and district grants, as well as polio grants, once they have been approved.



Among other things, the multiyear partnership between The Rotary Foundation (Canada) and Global Affairs Canada funded water, wellness, and education projects in Colombia and Peru.



What changes do you see in the future for TRF (Canada)?

The most notable change we are working on is to become more proactive in exploring a variety of opportunities for financial support to the programs run by Canadian Rotary clubs.

TRF (Canada) engaged in a very successful, multiyear partnership with Global Affairs Canada, which is a department of the government of Canada. Do you foresee a resumption of that partnership?

Following a brief hiatus, we are once again in communication with the govern-

ment of Canada about the possibility of funding support for international projects, much as we did between 2015 and 2020.

Do you have any advice to share?

The Foundation has provided the ability for Canadian Rotary and Rotaract clubs to leverage and increase their impact both globally and locally. I encourage clubs to use the data related to our global impact to attract both new donors and new members. I also encourage clubs to continue to form worldwide partnerships and look for more opportunities to do large-scale projects in Canada.

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Être femme et gouverneure: Mission possible

par Katie Burke, club Cornwall Sunrise

En 1989, le Conseil de législation du Rotary a décidé que les femmes pouvaient être admises comme membres officielles du Rotary et non seulement présentes aux réunions en tant qu'épouses de membres. Ce fut un moment important. Onze ans plus tard, la première gouverneure du district 7040 a pris sa place dans l'histoire du district. Il s'agit de Bette Miller qui a mené notre région – composé de clubs du Québec et de l'Ontario ainsi que du nord de l'état de New York, en 2000-2001. Depuis l'arrivée de notre première gouverneure, le district a bénéficié de neuf femmes qui ont entrepris ce rôle (dont moi, en 2010-11). Elles sont les braves personnes qui ont dû subir des expériences parfois drôles, parfois moins drôles. Je vous présente les résultats de mes enquêtes, sous promesse d'anonymat.

La première chose qu'il faut admettre, c'est que ces femmes se sont bien préparées pour leur rôle. Elles savaient qu'elles étaient sous le microscope, beaucoup plus que les gouverneurs masculins; elles ont donc fait un grand effort pour être bien préparées avec beaucoup

d'organisation, de demandes très claires, et des discours sentis. Elles se présentaient comme professionnelles en comportement et en style. Elles arrivaient à temps et se préparaient rigoureusement pour l'événement, que ce soit de jour ou de soirée. Elles étaient très conscientes qu'elles allaient passer par un examen minutieux dans leur rôle.

Mais ceci n'empêchait pas des moments curieux. Dans les premières années, les vestes obligatoires et disponibles pour les gouverneurs étaient des vestes conçues pour hommes. Plusieurs gouverneures ont dû faire des ajustements pour qu'elles puissent les porter confortablement. Les visites de clubs furent parfois des occasions de confusion. Dans un cas, le mari de la gouverneure a décidé après trois visites de clubs avec son épouse qu'il allait rester à la maison malgré le fait qu'il trouvait les réunions intéressantes. Pourquoi? Il était fatigué d'expliquer qu'il n'était pas le gouverneur et de voir l'expression de choc ou d'embarras quand il disait que la femme qu'il accompagnait était la gouverneure!

Parfois la réception à un club était moins qu'accueillante : Nos gouverneures

se sont fait dire qu'elles ne pouvaient pas dire aux clubs comment mener le club; que les clubs ne donneraient pas à la Fondation Rotary parce qu'il y avait assez à faire dans la communauté sans envoyer leurs fonds ailleurs; que le discours était trop long ou trop court; que le club était indépendant et ne se mêlait pas aux affaires du district. Dans chaque cas, la gouverneure a noté le besoin d'éducation du club et a subtilement organisé les leçons sur la vie au sein du Rotary. Heureusement que le District a eu la sagesse de choisir des gouverneures avec un bon sens de l'humour.

Une gouverneure a noté que deux éléments essentiels pour le rôle sont un téléphone cellulaire et un GPS. Les aventures géographiques dans les diverses régions du district par des routes assez curieuses ont amplifié les expériences des gouverneures.

En réfléchissant sur l'expérience d'être gouverneure du District 7040, toutes les femmes auxquelles j'ai parlé ont indiqué que leur année à la tête du district leur a donné un aperçu non seulement du rôle de gouverneur mais aussi une expérience inoubliable comme pionnières du Rotary!

Les gouverneures du District 7040

Bette Miller, 2000-01	Linda Bradley, 2006-07	Katie Burke, 2010-11	Bonnie Black, 2013-14	Ariane Carriere, 2014-15	Susan Bellor, 2017-18	Martha Weaver, 2018-19	Fay Campbell, 2021-22	Teresa Whitmore, 2024-25
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PROFILE

Full circle

A malnutrition project in his native Pakistan brings Najeeb Syed back to his roots

In Pakistan, more than a third of children under 5 experience stunted growth from severe malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization. Rotarian Najeeb Syed is on a mission to change that.

Syed is leading an effort by Rotary clubs in Canada, Pakistan, and the United States to provide lifesaving nutrition to Pakistani children through packets of nutrient-rich, peanut-based paste known as ready-to-use therapeutic food, or RUTF. The packets are used around the world to treat the most dangerous form of malnutrition, known as wasting, and are mostly distributed by UNICEF.

Without intervention, stunted growth as a child can have lifelong effects, from poor educational outcomes to less lucrative job opportunities and chronic diseases. “When they grow up, they will not perform well for the community,” Syed says. “They will not find good jobs. We are creating a new generation who’s going to be always poor, and then they will have children who will be worse. It’s a vicious cycle.”

But it doesn’t have to be that way, adds Syed, a 68-year-old member of the Rotary Club of St. Catharines South, Ontario, and chair of its international service committee. He hopes free nutritional support and parental education can change the direction of young lives in the country where he grew up.

Syed moved to Canada more than 30 years ago, relocating his young family to St. Catharines to help his sister after a rare medical condition suddenly affected his brother-in-law. In Pakistan, he had been manager of a pharmaceutical company. On arriving in Canada, Syed worked in fast food restaurants and a factory, then studied to become a certified pedorthist, a specialist in using therapeutic shoes to



Above: Najeeb Syed (far right) and his club hold a fundraiser last summer in Mississauga to support the project in Pakistan. Left: Syed talks with a mother in February while touring clinics in Pakistan where the program is operating.



relieve painful and disabling foot conditions. That led to opening a business that makes and dispenses custom orthotic devices for the feet.

Syed had been familiar with Rotary for years: He had an uncle who was a Rotarian, and his wife’s family was also involved, including serving as hosts to Rotary Youth Exchange students. So when he was invited to become a member of St. Catharines South in 2008, Syed gladly accepted. “Rotary has opened up my mind and my eyes quite a bit,” he says. His club has helped bring breadfruit trees to parts of the world struggling with food insecurity, and, under his leadership of the international service committee, it has worked with Project Peanut Butter, an effort to address childhood malnutrition in Africa.

When Syed learned of a similar need in Pakistan, he got his club involved. He also

enlisted the support of the Rotary clubs of Karachi, Pakistan, and Sacramento, California. Today, a network of 64 clinics throughout Pakistan assesses children’s health, distributes free sachets of RUTF, and educates parents. A Rotary Foundation global grant helped fund part of the project, and donations have come from other sources, including the public and the Canada-based Humaniti Foundation. “We supply the clinics with food,” Syed says, which keeps costs minimal. “When they run low, they let us know and we will supply them again.”

Each sachet of RUTF contains peanut paste, powdered milk, vegetable oil, sugar, and vitamins, and it provides 500 calories and essential micronutrients. The sachets are inexpensive, can be stored at room temperature, and can last two years.

Since moving from Pakistan, much has changed for Syed — and not only in his work life. His three children have grown up, and he’s a grandfather. But the chance to help children in his native country “get their lives back to normal” through his Rotary service is bringing him back to his roots. “It’s a blessing that I was able to do it,” he says, “because as you can see, it’s not an easy task.” — AMY HOAK



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