

# ROTARYCanada.

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VIEW FROM THE NORTH

## Banner days

**I**N 1964, the Canadian government appointed a 15-person committee to design a new national flag. From the thousands of designs submitted by Canadians, the committee chose a flag proposed by George Stanley, the dean of arts at the Royal Military College of Canada: a single red maple leaf on a white field and flanked by two broad red stripes.

After approval from Parliament and an endorsement from Queen Elizabeth II, the new flag was first raised over Parliament Hill in a public ceremony on 15 February 1965. “May the land over which this new flag flies remain united in freedom and justice ... sensitive, tolerant, and compassionate towards all,” said Prime Minister Lester Pearson, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and, as his sentiments suggest, an honorary Rotarian.

As you can see, *Rotary Canada* has undergone a redesign of its own. We’ve created a lively new look that better reflects Rotary’s vitality, a vitality undiminished by the COVID-19 virus — as you will discover in “Pandemic People of Action,” the story of one club’s new approach to meetings and service projects in District 5020 in British Columbia.

But among the changes made in our redesign, you will find one familiar emblem: We’ve kept in place the bright red maple leaf that, after 56 years, has become the indelible symbol of Canada.

### GEOFFREY JOHNSON

*Executive editor, Rotary Canada*

# ROTARYCanada

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Rotary 

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Adventure in Understanding, a program founded in 2014 by Don Watkins of the Rotary Club of Peterborough Kawartha, Ontario, brings together First Nations and non-native teenagers for a six-day canoe trip. “I made new friends from different cultures,” said a 2016 paddler. “They learned about my ways and traditions, and I learned about theirs.”



## FIELD NOTES

# Now, voyageurs

*First Nations and non-native teens canoe  
into an adventure in understanding*

In the fall of 2012, Don Watkins attended two events in Peterborough, Ontario, that led him to a singular idea. The first was a lecture by the Canadian author Joseph Boyden, who told the story of a Cree man who walked for 31 days with his son and several other First Nations people to the inaugural Truth and Reconciliation National Event, held in Winnipeg in 2010. Along the way they talked, shared stories, and learned from one another.

The second event was a presentation by James Rafan of the Canadian Canoe Museum, who related the story of Canada One, the canoe that participated in Queen Elizabeth II's 2012 jubilee flotilla in London. "There was an aha moment when I realized we could encourage young First Nations and non-native youth to share a canoe trip on the Trent-Severn Waterway that flows in and around Peterborough," says Watkins. "A canoe trip would put those young people in touch with the water, the air, the plants, the animals, and, most importantly, with each other."

With backing from the Rotary Club of Peterborough Kawartha, where he's a member, and after forming partnerships with the Canoe Museum, Camp Kawartha (which offers outdoor and environmental programming), and Curve Lake First Nation, Watkins launched his first trip in the summer of 2014. Called Adventure in Understanding, the program brings together 20 young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18 for a six-day, five-night excursion from Peterborough to the Curve Lake First Nation powwow grounds, a distance of 100 kilometres.

Paddling three large voyageur canoes, the youths, accompanied by four adults, navigate a 117-year-old lift lock on the way to Trent University, where they listen to a traditional Knowledge Keeper explain *nibi* (water) teachings inside a tepee at the First Peoples

"The tree for me is a symbol of hope, and it represents the friendships I've made."

— Avery Hinchcliffe



Canoeists participate in an Inuit blanket toss.

House of Learning's traditional area. At Camp Kawartha, they take part in First Nations games and activities; there is also a side trip, by bus, to see the rock carvings at Petroglyphs Provincial Park.

Once they reach Curve Lake First Nation, the teens join in a drumming ceremony, learn about the importance of wild rice to Indigenous people, and plant a tree that they have carried since the start of the trip. "The tree for me is a symbol of hope, and it represents the friendships I've made," says Avery Hinchcliffe, who made the trip in 2018.

After six successive annual trips, the pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2020 Adventure in Understanding, but its organizers expect a new group of First Nations and non-native teens to be back on the water this summer. In the meantime, they are encouraging other clubs in District 7010 to connect with neighbouring First Nations communities and develop their own programs. "It may or may not be canoe-based," says Watkins, "but something that they can do together to reach out in a sense of reconciliation, starting with better friendship and leading hopefully to cooperation and greater understanding."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

To learn more about Adventure in Understanding, or to nominate a candidate for the program, go to [pkaiu.com](http://pkaiu.com).





FEATURE

# Pandemic people of action

*A British Columbia club confronts the new realities imposed by COVID-19*

**L**IKE THEIR counterparts around the world, Rotarians in Canada have found creative ways to respond to COVID-19. In British Columbia, on the east coast of Vancouver Island, the pandemic compelled the Rotary Club of Ladysmith to cancel one annual event after another, even as the club approached its 50th anniversary. Driven by necessity, it implemented inventive new approaches to meetings and to service projects, locally and abroad.

After some initial resistance, the club, which met weekly at a local pub and restaurant called the Fox & Hounds, made the transition to Zoom. “Attendance was low at first,” says Gerry Beltgens, the club’s public image chair. “Many of our members are not big fans of technology, and our early meetings were understandably frustrating as they struggled to log in or

left their mikes on as the dog howled in the background. But over time, the number of attendees crept up as people became comfortable with the technology and realized they could enjoy their favourite beverage without having to pay \$7.50 a glass.”

In June, in a Zoom meeting attended by past, current, and incoming governors of District 5020 (which comprises Vancouver Island and northwestern Washington state), the club installed its new president, Eileen Beltgens (Gerry’s wife). Beltgens had helped develop and establish the Interact club at Ladysmith Secondary School, and she reaffirmed the club’s commitment to supporting and engaging those young people, and the members of two local Rotaract clubs, in service activities and leadership programs.

Beltgens also set the tone for the months ahead. “This year we might have to leave our assumptions at the

door, loosen our grip on our version of normal and how we’ve always done things, and be curious about what we might accomplish doing things differently,” she said.

The club accepted the challenge, rethinking its golf outing (held in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Chemainus) and planning activities for the spring, which could include a paper shredding event, a virtual garden tour, and an event, called Loving Your Community, to honour the altruistic people and businesses in town. Members also brainstormed ways to replenish the club’s bank account. Each year, it raises funds for the following Rotary year, so it had money set aside for 2020-21. Turning its attention to 2021-22, it established a fundraising committee to explore ways of either adapting existing events or creating new ones. “We soon realized that the challenge to creating big new events is that community awareness takes time,” says Gerry Beltgens. “We chose to pick off some easy low-hanging fruit and organize events that are tried and true.”

Following a game plan established in a nearby town by the Rotary Club of Chemainus, the Ladysmith club turned to a series of bottle drives, which were held in a parking lot in the centre of town on four Sundays over the summer. “We practised physical distancing and followed other COVID-19 safety protocols,” Gerry Beltgens says. “We all wore masks to keep one another safe, and we set up a process that allowed people to drop off their containers in a safe way. We even had a driver who made pickups.” In the end, the club collected more than 20,000 bottles, cans, and juice boxes, raising \$2,500 for community projects.

In September, as smoke from the forest fires in Washington and Oregon drifted north over Vancouver Island, the club began work on a project that had been in the planning stages for two years. In 2018, it had teamed up with other Ladysmith service clubs and the Mid-Isle Soccer Club to create an all-access



**Bagatelle**  
Members of the Rotary Club of Ladysmith turned trash into treasure, collecting bottles, cans, and juice boxes that they cashed in to fund community projects.

Courtesy of Gerry Beltgens



walking trail around the Forrest Field soccer pitch. Having raised about \$20,000 for the project and secured the necessary approvals for the plans, the group meant to break ground in early 2020, widening the concrete sidewalk at the field so that people using wheelchairs or walkers could navigate around spectators during games.

The pandemic put a hold on those plans, but in the fall volunteers completed that first phase of the project. Now they're looking forward to the next stage, which will include the installation of a new entrance to the trail. "Having all the service groups, sports associations, local companies, and volunteers come together to improve the Forrest Field complex shows what fantastic things can be accomplished by this community when we work together," says Ken Greig, a Ladysmith Rotarian who chairs the Forrest Field Stakeholders Committee. "The improvements will benefit people of all ages within Ladysmith and be an attraction to our community."

Meanwhile, the Mid Island Group, formed by the Rotary clubs of Chemainus, Ladysmith, and Nanaimo, continued its efforts to assist

Mayan villagers in the Lake Atitlán area of Guatemala, particularly in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, San Antonio Palopo, and San Lucas Tolimán. For several years, the group had been involved in sustainable projects there, collaborating with local women's groups. Once the pandemic struck, the Canadian Rotarians received grim reports from the region. Under a strict lockdown and with a dire shortage of food, residents were on the verge of starvation. There was a desperate need for hygienic supplies, masks, and other personal protective equipment. Most of the residents had been marginal farmers working for large landowners at low wages; now unemployed, they had no social safety net to fall back on.

That's when Disaster Aid Canada, a project of the Ladysmith club, stepped in, raising more than \$15,000 to provide support for the residents. Donations came from Disaster Aid Australia, Ireland, and the United Kingdom; the Rotary Club of Poulsbo-North Kitsap, Washington (another District 5020 club); and the clubs in the Mid Island Group, which distributed the funds through their connections in the Indigenous communities.

**Feast day**  
A Mayan family in Guatemala displays the food and other necessities it received thanks to funds provided by Disaster Aid Canada and its partners.

"After three months in lockdown, the Mayan villages are mostly safe from the virus but suffering serious famine," Jacqueline Sheppard, a member of the Rotary Club of Chemainus, reported from San Antonio Palopo in June. "No one is allowed out of their house except for essential services, which results in no money, no food, and emotionally fraught, severely undernourished children. For the first time, young boys are now permitted to go out with their fathers to search for cooking wood in the forest, which is a welcome break."

Slowly, the situation had begun to improve. Santa, a mother of six, had converted the lower room of her cement block home into a warehouse and distribution centre. "We provided a propane tank refill for 25 women last week, and best of all, 300 families — 550 people in total — are now regularly receiving food and nutritional supplements," Sheppard wrote. "For this essential service, we are grateful to Disaster Aid Canada, Rotary, and very generous friends. [The residents] are quietly smiling from behind their masks."

In late fall, writing from British Columbia, Gerry Beltgens provided another update. "The villagers are not safe yet, but the corn harvest is now nearly ready, and the situation is not as dire," he explained. "However, Hurricane Eta has caused severe flooding and landslides, so we are continuing to raise funds to send a shipment of goods and cash through Rotary clubs in Guatemala and with the help of Canadian Rotary clubs that work in Central America."

With the pandemic unabated at press time, undaunted club members looked towards the future, prepared to adapt further as needed. "I want us to engage our community to work with us to create solutions to problems that will strengthen us all," Eileen Beltgens had said at her installation. "And I want us to celebrate what we do and who we are as people of action with commitment and pride as members of the Rotary Club of Ladysmith."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON







## PROFILE

# A knight to remember

**I**N 2002, Geoffrey Lougheed became a knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, which traces its origins back to the Knights Hospitaller of the Crusades. Twelve years earlier, in 1990, Queen Elizabeth II had bestowed the same honour on Lougheed's father, Gerry. With Geoffrey's knighthood, the two men, who lived in Sudbury, Ontario, became the only father-son knights of the order in Canada.

To commemorate the occasion, the Lougheeds created a family crest. It bore the motto *Servire est vivere*: to serve is to live. It could just as easily have said *Service Above Self*.

Born outside Windsor in 1929, Gerry Lougheed moved to Sudbury with his wife, Marguerite, in 1952. There he opened Lougheed's Funeral Home and Flower Shop (his sons, Geoffrey and Gerry Jr., run the business today); he also joined the Rotary Club of Sudbury. He served as the club's president in the

mid-1960s, and he was the 1978-79 governor of what is today District 7010. As district governor, Gerry travelled to India with Marguerite; they would return to that country over the years to build a school and establish a literacy program.

In addition to running the funeral home, Gerry established a local ambulance service; he was the first operator in Ontario to carry oxygen in his vehicles, and his pioneering efforts to ensure that his ambulance attendants completed accredited first-aid courses established a provincial standard and led to his being knighted by the queen's representative, the governor general of Canada. His son Geoffrey later served a two-year term as the chancellor of the Canadian priory of St. John Ambulance, an international organization, staffed by volunteers, that teaches and provides health care, first aid, and emergency medical services.

After a long battle with cancer, Marguerite died in 2006; Gerry followed six years later.

**"Mom and Dad brought us up to embrace our community as family," says Geoffrey Lougheed (above left, with his father, Gerry, and brother, Gerry Jr.). "Whether the need is on our street or halfway around the world, helping others is the opportunity to change lives."**

His funeral, held at the Marguerite Lougheed Community Centre in Sudbury, drew 500 mourners. Geoffrey eulogized his father as someone who "believed we were all family and that we should treat everyone exactly as family. I think that was one of the reasons why he was so popular: He had a very simple sense of goodness that he wanted to share with everyone as part of his family."

Gerry Lougheed's sons followed their father into Rotary: Geoffrey, 62, is a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Sudbury, while Gerry Jr., 66, is a member, and was the founding president, of the Rotary Club of Sudbury Sunrises. Their Lougheed Foundation has donated more than \$200,000 to The Rotary Foundation for projects in India with the aim of supporting literacy and science education as well as Rotary's WASH in Schools program. This initiative provides toilets for boys and girls, hand-washing facilities, and safe drinking water, and implements other projects dedicated to sanitation and hygiene.

Their most recent gift, also destined for India, was a mobile cancer van donated in the memory of their parents. "Rotary is defined as Service Above Self, which captures the essence of our parents," says Gerry Jr. "To send this message of love today, over 40 years after Mom and Dad first travelled to India, is a wonderful gift."

During a recent Zoom address to the Sunrises club, Surinder Pal Singh Grover, a physician and a member of the Rotary Club of Jalandhar West, India, who will operate the van, thanked the brothers and the Lougheed Foundation for the gift. "This donation in memory of two wonderful people allows us to save lives and heal our community," he said. "This van puts the values of Rotary into action."

"Mom and Dad brought us up to embrace our community as family," Geoffrey says. "Whether the need is on our street or halfway around the world, helping others is the opportunity to change lives. The Rotary spirit of service was woven deep into the Lougheed DNA."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

## NOTES DE TERRAIN

# Le club Rotary de Hearst livre des paniers réconfort

par Sophie Gagnon, club Rotary de Hearst

**L**E CLUB ROTARY DE HEARST a vu le jour en juin 1988, et depuis sa création, il a amassé des dons importants pour, entre autres, les enfants et familles défavorisés de la région. Dans le cadre d'une initiative du gouvernement du Canada et de Centraide, 5 000 \$ a été remis au club Rotary de Hearst afin de monter un projet pour les gens âgés de 55 ans et plus en cette difficile période de pandémie. Une équipe de six bénévoles a travaillé ensemble afin de mettre l'accent sur ce qui semblait être un besoin criant, soit contrer l'isolement social et favoriser la santé mentale des personnes de 55 ans et plus qui vivent cette situation de manière plus pénible.

Hearst est une communauté du nord de l'Ontario qui compte environ 5 000 habitants. À l'annonce des restrictions associées à la pandémie, les gens se sont serré les coudes pour offrir des services aux personnes âgées, et des dons multiples ont été faits aux banques alimentaires de la région par le club Rotary et d'autres organismes et particuliers. Donc, les besoins de base ont été satisfaits. C'est l'isolement des gens qui frappait le plus.

En collaboration avec Vieillir chez soi, un organisme qui soutient les personnes âgées et handicapées au moyen de divers services tels qu'une bibliothèque mobile et un service de transport, les organismes de soins de santé de la région, ainsi que des membres du club Rotary de Hearst, ont établi une liste de 72 personnes de 55 ans et plus.

Les gens avaient le choix entre cinq paniers réconfort, selon leur goût. Ces paniers incluaient un bac de jardinage, composé de deux bacs à fleurs, de terre et de semis de légumes et de fines herbes; un ensemble de tricot/couture avec le choix des maté-

riaux pour faire une ou plusieurs créations de leur goût; le plus populaire, un panier d'articles de soins personnels pour se pomponner et quelques grignotines en prime; et un panier divertissement pour le plaisir avec des mots croisés, des mandalas, du papier pour écrire et de petites friandises. Tous les paniers avaient une valeur de 75 \$, quoique les magasins locaux nous aient offert beaucoup d'aide et divers rabais afin de maximiser le contenu de chaque panier. L'engouement pour ces paniers était contagieux, et c'était beau à voir.

Pour les bénéficiaires, la visite d'une personne était déjà un cadeau en soi, et les attentions remises ont su faire le bonheur des gens. Une note du club accompagnait les paniers et en retour, nous avons reçu plusieurs mots de remerciement. Au total, 72 paniers ont été livrés par des membres du club Rotary et leurs amis, avec un masque et dans le plaisir total.

Toute l'organisation s'est déroulée via Zoom et Messenger, en moins de deux semaines. C'est la preuve que les petites choses peuvent faire de grands bonheurs.



Pour les bénéficiaires, la visite d'une personne était déjà un cadeau en soi.

Les gens avaient le choix entre cinq paniers réconfort.







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