



December 22, 2025
Volume 43 - Issue 14

"Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change - across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves!"

The Rotary Club of Calgary comprises professional and community leaders brought together in fellowship to make a better future.

UNITE FOR GOOD



Rotary International's theme for the 2025-2026 year

Birthdays

David Hood	December 27
Alexandra Runge	December 28
Festus Omogiate	December 31
Lori Forand	January 1
Bruce Graham	January 3
Sonny Belenkie	January 5
Jim Shaner	January 16
Emery Varga	January 16

Rotary Anniversaries

Dan Hays	55 years
Gerard D'Mello	10 years
Helen Hu	10 years
Diane Macdonald	5 years

What you may have missed at the Dec 16, 2025 RCCD meeting

Doug McMillan

Call to Order: President Bill Hamilton welcomed 52 members and guests before Michael Pierson (on the piano) lead O Canada. During his invocation, Bob Taylor emphasized the importance of “connectiveness” and asked each Rotarian to reach out over this holiday season to three people with whom they had limited contact during the past year. President Bill thanked

“Front of House” volunteers (Berti Kawooya, Dorothy Loucks, Terry McMahon and Steacy Pinney).

New Business: Following “Happy Bucks” and birthdays recognized by Michael Broadhurst, Barbara Tolevski was inducted as a new member of RCCD by President nominee, Sean Baylis. Barbara was a Rotarian in Kamloops and worked at the University of Alberta prior to her present role as a Senior Philanthropy Advisor for the Calgary Health Foundation. (Further details later in COG).



Holiday events including the Club dinner December 9, the BBQ for seniors Dec 4 and the Dec 11 literacy event with the Little Red Reading House were enjoyed by club members and others. (See later in COG).

John Hsu introduced this past year’s outbound Rotary Exchange student Jennie McDonald who described her experience in Chile September 2024 to June 2025. In previous years, Jennie benefited from our Stay in School program. During this Exchange experience she attended Collegia Santo Domingo. Hosted by three local families in Santiago, she also had opportunity to visit Easter Islands, Patagonia and Atacama. She thanked the club for the opportunity to grow as a young person, for new experiences, and to meet new friends from all over the world.



Guest Speaker: Michael Pierson introduced Dr. Terry Clark, Director of Mount Royal University Conservatory whose own educational opportunities included U of C, UWO, Queens University and the Royal College of London for his PhD in musical performance. He is a well-recognized flautist and has experience in many aspects of music.

Dr. Clark indicated that Mount Royal College (MRC) started in 1910 and the Conservatory in 1911. In 1935, his grandfather played cello in the Conservatory's Symphony Orchestra, went on the teach at MRC and play in the Calgary Symphony and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

Today, Mount Royal University Conservatory has over 100 instructors conducting over 200 workshops for 2,500 students and is a prominent member of the Calgary Arts community. In addition to assisting several bands, the Conservatory provides over \$300,000 in scholarships annually thanks to gracious donors.

A relatively new program relates to the important benefits of music to health and well- being including a program for children aged 1-5 years with autism. In addition to education/training, the Art Care Hub supports research and community engagement and participates in three annual conferences. Aspirations include:

1. Music as prevention in addition to treatment
2. Support of the education and development, especially of young talent, and
3. Collaboration with healthcare providers and other community members.

Dr. Clark introduced Sophie Ryskine who indicated the importance of her “home” in the Conservatory before entertaining those present with a violin solo. This appeared to improve the mental well- being of many of those present.



Both speakers were thanked with an indication that a donation to Wellspring Cancer Support was being made by the club in their names.

Closing: Congratulations to Bob Taylor for winning the 50/50 draw with the associated prize of almost \$900. President Bill closed the meeting with all reciting the Four Way Test.

Next meeting: January 13, 2026 at the Palliser Hotel

Speaker: Kai Fahrion, CEO Zeno Renewables

Topic: Renewable Energy

New Member Barbara Tolevski

Diane Macdonald

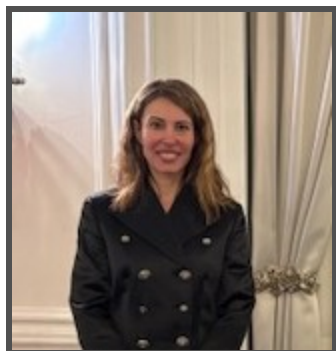
Barbara is our newest member, introduced at the meeting on December 16th. She is not new to Rotary, however, as she was a member of the Rotary Club of Kamloops Downtown in 2022.

Barbara was born in Belgrade, Serbia, is multilingual and has had extensive international living and working experience. She recently joined the Calgary Health Foundation as Senior Philanthropy Advisor following senior advancement leadership roles at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops and the University of Alberta where she was recognized among the top ten fundraisers securing over \$5M in gifts for the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. Globally, she founded the International Education Center in Niš, Serbia developing an early learning bilingual curriculum and owns a preschool and childcare center. She has also worked extensively as a producer, director of development, and project lead in cultural, educational, and nonprofit sectors.

Barbara says that she was drawn to her current role at the Calgary Health Foundation by the opportunity to be part of a powerful vision that supports the advancement of health care through medical breakthroughs and a commitment to excellence. It brings her joy to see the real-life impact of her work. She mentions that being part of a philanthropy team and contributing as a fundraiser allows her to witness the positive difference they make in so many lives. She describes it both humbling and inspiring.

Beyond her career and volunteer commitments, Barbara is a wife and mother who unwinds through horse-back riding (she is an equestrian and certified riding instructor), meditation and yoga and relaxes by listening to classical music while watching live videos of natural wonders from around the world, including Alberta's stunning national parks.

Barbara, we're delighted to have you as a member of the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown. I'm sure your many talents will be appreciated by many areas in our Club.



Christmas Dinner at the Calgary Golf and Country Club – December 9, 2025

Madeleine King

On entering the beautiful event location at the Calgary Golf and Country Club, with the grounds lit up with Christmas lights, Rotarians and their guests, numbering about one

hundred, were met with music joyfully played by Manon Mitchell, Michael Pierson and William Friedson.



President Bill called the meeting to order- not easy with everyone enjoying the opportunity to chat amongst themselves.

Lorelei Parker, wearing her new peace pageant crown from India, gave a personal and meaningful Land Acknowledgement. After a delicious turkey dinner, it was time for the evening's special entertainment led by our Emcee Extraordinaire and President Elect, Doug Webb.

What an exceptional couple they make - three years after meeting at a Rotary Club meeting!



George Brookman gave an update on this year's very successful Christmas Hampers campaign.

Our own Manon Mitchell (and our District Governor) had prepared an amazing game in which we all participated. Each table got a seasonally wrapped box with the messages inside

determining the “Rotary-ized” carols they were to sing or the quiz questions they were to answer; some tables got off lightly with candies. All had fun with the activity.



There was a slide show of Rotary events throughout the year produced by John Seigneur. He also provided all the photos included in this article, and many more.



The evening finished with a wine draw organized by Dennis Tran, with Tom Loucks taking home several good bottles donated by all those who participated.

Dennis and his team were enthusiastically thanked for having organized such a wonderful evening!

Some of us are already looking forward to next year!

Update to the Club on Holiday Events

Jennifer Lavier Jankovic

Club Members & friends of Rotary have been busy spreading holiday cheer for low-income Calgary Seniors, both behind the scenes and on site at two recent Christmas events.

December 4, 2025, the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown BBQ Committee along with Tim Heaton's "Hippocratic Oath Big Band" hosted a dinner & dance at Murdock Manor in the East Village. 150 Residents enjoyed Popeyes chicken, salads and ice cream sundays with fellowship & dancing. A big thank you to Gord and Bev Graham, Brian Guichon, Trevor and Mary Axworthy, Gene Wasylichuk, Bob Ernter, Charles Pratt, Patti Dolan, Dave Richardson and Steve Stein and Dave MacDonald for volunteering & organizing the food service.



If you are looking for a way to get involved in the Community, the BBQ Committee would LOVE to have you. As its newest member, Jennifer can attest that it is small commitment with Big Rewards!!

On December 11, 2025, for the 3rd year, the Rotary Indigenous Relations Committee and the Little Red Reading House, through proceeds of the Big Book Sale, provided 100 gifts, and 150 books for the grandchildren of low-income Indigenous Seniors at the Circle of Wisdom Elder and Senior Centre Christmas Luncheon at the Marlborough Community Hall. A big thank you to the Team at Colliers Project Leaders and Grade 11 Student Lindsay who has attended Rotary leadership camps, who came out to wrap gifts.



When you support the Rotary Club of Calgary Big Book Sale through donations, volunteering or purchasing gently used books, this is one of the many ways you are supporting literacy for young Calgarians. A big thank you to Dawn Cruickshank and her team at the Little Red Reading House Book Bank who carefully curated a selection of 150 books, which included 100 books by Indigenous authors for Children Aged 0-Teen.

Rotary Stay-in-School Holiday Party

Iman Saad

Our Stay-in-School Holiday Party was a wonderful success with 40 students and mentors joining us for an afternoon filled with celebration, creativity, and connection.

The event featured a variety of engaging crafts and activities that brought everyone together. The kids enjoyed cookie decorating, making keychains, coloring Christmas ornaments, and creating bead ornaments. Laughter and teamwork filled the room during our featured group game, the Human Christmas Tree, where participants worked together in four teams to decorate their “tree.” It was a fun, energetic activity that encouraged collaboration and sparked lots of smiles.

Mentors played a key role throughout the event, supporting the kids during each activity, helping them get involved, and contributing to the warm, welcoming atmosphere that made the celebration so special.



Club Meeting Dates - Note NEW changes!

President Bill Hamilton and Program Director Terry McMahon

Jan. 13 - Guest Speaker: Kai Fahrion, renewable energy

Jan. 27 - Guest Speaker: Bryce Starlight, Taza Park Tsuut'ina Nation

Feb. 10 - Guest Speaker: Mayor Jeromy Farkas

Feb. 17 - Special Meeting - Club Assembly

Feb. 24 - Guest Speaker: John Brown, Dean of the University of Calgary School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape

Mar. 10 - Guest Speaker: Chief of Police Katie McLellan

Mar. 24 - Guest Speaker: Lara Murphy, Calgary Wild women's soccer team CEO

Apr. 7

Apr. 21 - Guest Speaker: Cheryl Barnard, Olympian and CEO Sports Hall of Fame

May 5 and 19

June 2, 16 and 30

Proudly Presenting Our Corporate Members



Upcoming Events

[Frank n' Stein \(1st Thursday\).](#)

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Jan. 01, 2026

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

[Luncheon -January 13, 2026 - Guest Speaker Kai Fahrion](#)

133 9 Avenue Southwest

Jan. 13, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (UTC-07:00)

[Frank n' Stein \(3rd Thursday_\)](#)

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Jan. 15, 2026

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

[January 27 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker Bryce Starlight](#)

133 9 Avenue SW,

Jan. 27, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (UTC-07:00)

[Frank n' Stein \(1st Thursday\).](#)

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Feb. 05, 2026
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

[February 10 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker: Cheryl Bernard](#)

133 9 Ave SW

Feb. 10, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (UTC-07:00)

[February 17 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker: Jeromy Farkas](#)

133 9 Avenue SW,

Feb. 17, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (UTC-07:00)

[Frank n' Stein \(3rd Thursday_\)](#)

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Feb. 19, 2026

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

[View entire list](#)

COG Staff - July 1, 2024

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