



February 2, 2026
Volume 43 - Issue 16

"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

Peter Adesina	February 3
Catherine Scheers	February 9
Iain Stewart	February 9
Steady Pinney	February 11
Tom Tait	February 12
Ayodeji Jeje	February 13

Anniversaries

Lawrence Bates	40 years
Bruce Fenwick	40 years
Charles Pratt	30 years
Joe Fris	30 years
Madeleine King	25 years
Yegana Allard	15 years
Manon Mitchell	15 years
Kurt Kowalchuk	15 years
Ryan Tizzard	5 years
William Friedson	5 years

Were you at the RCCD meeting January 27, 2026?

The Alberta Room was pretty full with club members and 18 guests for the meeting. After President Bill called the meeting to order (and commented that he is more than half way through his Rotary year as President), Michael Pierson led us in the singing of O Canada and Franco Savoia gave us a very meaningful invocation based on the value of the Rotary Four Way Test, not just in Rotary dealings but in all aspects of our lives. President Bill welcomed all our guests and thanked our front of house volunteers: Bruce Yorga, Dave Leslie, John Boyd and Manon Mitchell.

Following our Fellowship time, it was on to Happy Bucks. Doug McMillan was happy to see his brother, Al, at the meeting today with his daughter (Doug's niece). Manon Mitchell was happy to have been in the Dominican Republic last week to work on some of our Club's projects in that country. One of our guests was happy to be able to attend our meeting while in Calgary, away from her home in Scarborough, Maine (where she said there are many nice people who like Canadians!).

On a sad note, President Bill advised that Ralph Lundberg's wife, Ann, passed away last week. A card was circulated which will be sent to Ralph and his family. Manon Mitchell reported on the District Conference, coming up on May 1st to 3rd in Red Deer. A few members who had been to prior District Conferences commented on the fact that they are wonderful venues to make contacts with other like-minded Rotarians and share ideas. This year's conference will start with a party on Friday night with the Dueling Pianos from Las Vegas as the entertainment. Manon also told us about one of the guest speakers, Chris Koch, who was born without arms or legs but who farms and travels around the world as a motivational speaker. At the moment Chris and Manon are challenging themselves to, each day, stair climb the equivalent of the height of some of the world's tallest buildings.

We were introduced to two new Club members today. Peter Harrison introduced Helen Dang-Vu, whom he has known since elementary school. Helen was a Stay-in-School student in our Club's program and is now "paying back" by serving as a Mentor in the program. She will be a wonderful asset to our Club.

Festus Omogiate was introduced by Craig Henderson. Festus is originally from Nigeria but has lived in Canada for many years. He is an entrepreneur, currently working in the Real Estate business. In his free time he enjoys music, movies and spending time with his family. Welcome to our Club, Helen and Festus.







1. District Governor Manon Mitchell
2. New member Helen Dang-Vu
3. New member Festus Omogiate
4. Craig Henderson, Festus Omogiate, Helen Dang-Vu, Peter Harrison

Sonny Belenkie reported on a presentation to raise funds to buy generators for Ukraine to help the citizens with dark days and nights and with the lack of water. There will an Opera presentation on February 7th at the Cardel Theatre. Please see separate article.

Steve Allan was called upon to introduce our Guest Speaker, Bryce Starlight. Bryce is the Vice President of Business Development for Taza Developments which is one of the largest real estate developments in North America. He spoke about the challenge of finding the balance between preserving the legacy of the Tsuut'ina people and embracing change. He said that Legacy is power and the question is "How do you move on?" Legacy is like coming home, like family; change is inevitable but not easy. How do you interpret culture in an appropriate manner within change? The bottom line was that the Nation needed cash flow, services, employment and versatility in their economy. To achieve a thriving community they needed to deal with roadblocks. They needed to move forward, to modernize without erasing, to build capacity. They realized they couldn't just talk – they had to make decisions. Bryce said that with Taza, something amazing is coming. It is not completely well defined yet, but there is opportunity for sustainable growth, with flexibility to change as the market changes. The real estate development will be three villages, each its own entity. A partnership was developed with Canderel, with two Directors from each entity. They needed the capital and the reputation that Candarel brought to the partnership. Taza's values are defined as community and connectivity, cultural influence, nature with connection to the land and economic diversity. So far, the development is based on private equity – there has been no government funding – and to date, he feels the project has been successful.

Steve Allan thanked the speaker and presented him with our traditional certificate indicating a contribution to Wellspring.





5. Bryce Starlight Vice President of Taza Business Development
6. Bryce Starlight, President Bill, Steve Allan
7. Bryce Starlight accepting his certificate
8. Sonny Belenkie discussing generators for Ukraine

George Brookman was the winner of the 50/50 draw but he drew a blue marble; so it was chocolates for him, not cash.

The next meeting will be on February 10th in the Oak Room of the Palliser. The mayor, Jeromy Farkas, was to be the guest speaker but he has asked that his day be pushed back to a later date, so the speaker on the 10th will be announced once it is known. (SEE BELOW FOR SPEAKER INFO)

We ended the meeting with our recitation of the Four Way Test.



9. George Brookman winner of the 50/50 draw

A Rotarian at Heart for Many Years - Now an Official Member of Our Club

Diane Macdonald

Helen Dang-Vu was officially introduced to the Club at the lunch meeting on Tuesday, January 27th. We asked Helen for a few words about what she would like Club members to know about her.

In her own words:

"- I was an SIS student, mentored by Steve Allan. I then became a mentor myself in 2017 and joined the SIS committee shortly after. Through SIS, Rotary has been a constant in my life. I suppose the membership was a matter of time. - Professionally, I have been in HR for 14 years. I currently work for AHS as an HR Advisor, but I also have worked at Amazon, TJX Canada and Shaw.

- My passion is building up the leaders of tomorrow. As a SIS mentor, I have mentored one student into university and she is now pursuing a Social Work degree at MRU. My other two mentees are in Grade 9 and Grade 8 respectively. I am very much looking forward to working with SIS and the Youth Committee to bring these youth programs into the future.

- I love to spend time with my 4 year old son and my two cats. My son and I are frequent visitors to the science center. He loves to learn and has set some very ambitious goals for himself...

- As for hobbies...I have recently taught myself how to do my own nails, which was not easy. I also love to read and am currently re-reading Tolkien's The Silmarillion in anticipation of the 3rd season of the LOTR series on Amazon Prime. "

Helen, we are so happy to have you as a member of the Club and are very grateful for the work you have done and are doing as a Mentor with the Stay in School program.

2026: The Year of Reading in Calgary

Steady Pinney



Rotarians, we have some exciting news to share: 2026 is the Year of Reading in Calgary.

It's unofficial—but that has the Calgary Reads Big Book Sale and Kids Literacy Collective community all the more ecstatic and committed.

We're following in the footsteps of the [UK's National Year of Reading and its 'Go All In'](#) campaign – a response to all-time lows of reading for enjoyment.

We don't have local statistics but it's likely that here in Canada, and in Calgary, the numbers are similar for children:

In 2012, 53% of 9-year-olds read almost every day. In 2022, the number had fallen to 39%.

In 2012, 27% of 13-year-olds read for fun daily. By 2023, that number was just 14%.

(Source: Ken Follett, Raising Readers)

The time to act is now so we can help children learn to read by Grade 3 and build a lifelong love of reading. Readers grow up to be citizens who are engaged, give back to community, have better health outcomes and contribute to the economy.

In 2026, our goal is to help grow a movement of readers of individuals, workplaces, groups and even neighbourhoods committed to making reading a part of everyday life.

What does the Year of Reading in Calgary have to do with our club?

As stewards of Calgary Reads Big Book Sale and as leaders of the Early Childhood Literacy Committee, we can contribute in several fun and simple ways:

On Our Own

At home, in the park, at cafés, at year of reading events—each of us can be reading role models:

- Read to children in your life daily
- Model reading as a fun activity
- Reduce screen time
- Start a family, school or community book club
- Visit bookstores and libraries regularly
- Listen to audiobooks
- Read the book before you see the movie
- Encourage your child to read aloud to a pet or stuffed animal
- Give books as gifts
- Donate books to families and communities in need

As a Club

Let's work together to promote the Year of Reading by:

- Volunteering as a team for book sorting shifts at the Big Book Sale
- Doing a Book Drop in the Spring (stay tuned for more details)
- Keep collecting books to donate to the Big Book Sale and the Book Bank
- Follow kidsliteracycollective.ca on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to see how others in Calgary are getting involved

We know it's going to be quite a thing to see all the many ways Calgarians demonstrate their love of reading this year, so we're tracking personal pledges and group activities to understand how the movement is spreading. However small or everyday, [please submit your commitment here](#) – and happy reading!

Mental Health Addiction - A Key Focus of Mental Wellness

Laurene Wilson

More than one in four young adults struggle with addiction which includes alcohol, gambling, legal and illegal drugs. About 1 in 10 men and 1 in 20 women in Alberta struggle with alcohol abuse. Between January 2016 & June 2025 there were a total of 53,308 apparent opioid toxicity deaths across Canada. Alberta has high rates of mental health challenges (often linked to addiction with the rate of overdose deaths one of the highest in Canada. Universities are recognizing the impact unaddressed mental health & addiction issues are having on our youth and are building on- campus Recovery Centres. The economic impact of mental health & addiction costs the Alberta economy approximately \$14.4 billion USD annually through lost productivity.

This is a huge social issue which impacts every aspect of society and is associated with poverty, homelessness, crime, suicide, family dysfunction and reoccurring intergenerational trauma. Rotary's focus on this major challenge is an incredible opportunity to make a difference in society and in the lives of so many impacted by disease in mental health & addiction. It is said, "Alberta is undergoing the largest reorganization of healthcare on the planet." Now, using medically informed and lived experience, new approaches are being instituted here that are making a difference. With increased understanding, acceptance and support Rotary's opportunity to become known for our impact in supporting communities struggling with these issues is significant.

Recovery Alberta is a newly launched initiative which will expand access to treatment for mental health and addiction in Alberta. It's a step in the right direction.

How you can help: Whether volunteering or spreading the word, your contributions make a difference.

Be a mental health and addiction ally. Start conversations about mental health. Bring issues into the open, promoting dialogue and reducing stigma and check in on those you know are in need of support.

If you have an interest in this area please contact Laurene Wilson, at 604 818-8595 to see how we can work together as Rotarians in this area of need.

Classical Music & Opera Concert for Ukraine

Rotary
Clubs of Calgary
NORTH | DOWNTOWN
FISH CREEK | HERITAGE PARK



CLASSICAL MUSIC & OPERA CONCERT FOR UKRAINE

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

7 FEB | **CARDEL
THEATRE**
6 - 9 PM | Entry
Ticket: **\$50**



PURCHASE TICKETS USING QR CODE, AT THE DOOR,
OR BY E-TRANSFER TO
DONATE@UOCA.CA

TAX-DEDUCTABLE CHARITABLE DONATIONS MAY BE MADE:
AT THE EVENT BY CHEQUE TO THE ROTARY CLUB OF CALGARY NORTH FOUNDATION
ANYTIME BY E-TRANSFER TO
RCCN952FOUNDATION@GMAIL.COM

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE PURCHASE OF GENERATORS & MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR UKRAINE

Learning About More Than Rotary

Doug McMillan

Viewing the Rotary Learning Centre is a must for all Rotarians. Not only is there information about Rotary programs and activities but the Learning Centre has modules which may assist you in your work.

To access the Learning Centre, go to www.rotary.org and sign in with your name and pin. The pathway is > Knowledge & Resources > Learning Centre (Under Tools) and you will see 10 areas. Many areas relate to Rotary and will be helpful in your Rotary Activities. The **Professional Development** and **Learning Facilitator** areas have courses which may assist your personal development in many aspects of your life.

In each area there are 16 courses to potentially complete on line including "Becoming an Effective Facilitator", "Developing a Speech", "Essentials of Understanding Conflict" and many more. These interactive courses (you will get questions to answer) usually take about 15 minutes (although a few may take up to 90 minutes). Your personal completion of each course is recorded and you can access further courses as your time permits.

Find a few minutes to allow the Rotary Learning Centre help improve your abilities. While you are doing this, you may wish to look further into learning more about Rotary and visit sites which provide helpful information about many Rotary activities including preparing grant applications. **It's up to you!**

Club Meeting Dates - Note NEW changes!

President Bill Hamilton and Program Director Terry McMahon

Feb. 10 - Guest Speaker: Dr. Rob Heubert on Arctic Defence

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

Feb. 05, 2026

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

[February 10 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker: Jeromy Farkas](#)

133 9 Avenue SW,

Feb. 10, 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.

[February 24 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker: John Brown](#)

133 9 Ave SW

Feb. 24, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (UTC-07:00)

[Youth Committee Monthly Meeting](#)

Feb. 25, 2026

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Mar. 05, 2026

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

[Volunteer Event - Home for Dinner - Ronald McDonald Cagary House](#)

111 West Campus Place

Mar. 12, 2026 3:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)

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

CHECK YOUR EMAIL

Mar. 19, 2026

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

[Youth Committee Monthly Meeting](#)

Mar. 25, 2026

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

[View entire list](#)

COG Staff - July 1, 2024

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