

The Weekly Westerner

Box 4572, Station C, Calgary, Alberta T2T 5N3
Grey Eagle Hotel, 3777 Grey Eagle Drive (Corner of 37 St SW and Glenmore Drive)
Mondays 12.10 pm - 1.30 pm

President: Bill Fitzsimmons **President-Elect:** Marlene Doherty **Past President:** Gerry Meek
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Ken Montgomery, Drew Turnbull

Together We Are People of Action - Building Community

July 27, 2020 Edition: 54.4 Reporter: Marie Rickard Editor: David Williams

The Zoom meeting was brought to you today with the technical know-how of **Gord Cox**.

All attendees had a chance to chat prior to the meeting. **President Bill Fitzsimmons** welcomed all to the meeting today. President Bill is requesting members to step forward to take on two team Leader positions. **Bill Quinney** is taking on committee chairperson for Local Community Service projects and **Cha-Cha Chansiri** finds herself a little too busy at work this year. **Please contact President Bill to help him fill these important positions.**

There is no meeting on the August long weekend, but on Thursday evening, August 6, there will be a meeting to be announced by **Tim Anderson**, our program chair. The next Monday noon meeting will be August 10, and will be a discussion by the Local Community Service committee on funding and projects. Please include this important discussion in you schedule.

Guest Speaker

Corey Tretiak introduced our speaker today. **India Sherret**, from Cranbrook, BC, was as part of the 2018 Winter Olympics Ski Cross team. She is determined, perseverant and passionate about her sport, and a proud team hopeful for the 2022 Olympics. See Team Canada's website at www.olympic.ca.

India Sherret's story is not all about sport. It is about the many personal hurdles in her young life she had to overcome. At the age of 15 years, India, an admitted overachiever and perfectionist, was already an accomplished 4th place winner in the 2012 Winter Youth Olympic Games as a ski cross racing athlete. In 2012-13, she was the overall Nor-Am Cup champion for ski cross. She quotes an "all or nothing" type of thinking that lead her to feelings of being unworthy, bulimia nervosa, depression, and anxiety. After four years of dealing with this on her own, at 19 years, during the 2015-2016 season, she took time out and started to focus on herself and through the "Looking Glass Program" in Vancouver, she did the work to find herself and change her life. See www.lookingglassbc.com. She struggled with recovery, but rapidly returned to competitive sport and reconnected to a renewed sense of purpose and hope and drive.

The Weekly Westerner

July 27, 2020

In 2017, she returned to ski cross at the Nor-Am level and quickly advanced to the World Cup level, winning 3rd and a podium spot in Idre Fjall, Sweden. In 2018, at her Olympic debut in PyeongChang, she broke her back when she crashed hard off a jump, which exacerbated the pressure she was experiencing. She did not want to let down her country, family, or herself. However, glorious, competing in the Olympics seems to be spending half your time in the hospital, which was not glamorous. She returned home and wore a back brace, and after a two-month recovery returned to her skiing. She was dealing with a lot of shame and disappointment at the time. She relapsed into an eating disorder and poor mental health, including suicidal feelings. It took a lot to seek health professionals and be able to articulate her feelings to turn her mental health in a positive direction. She sought the help of a sport psychologist and psychiatrist, and she advises that there is no one cure-all for people suffering with mental illness, but there is hope. You are not alone. For the last few years, she has had a turn-around and reports feeling happy.

Mental illness isolates you and pulls you away from dealing with your issues and from those that love you. Sharing takes away the shame and brings hope. Early teens, 14 years up to the early 20s, are at risk for developing eating disorders. Over one million Canadians meet the criteria for eating disorders. Diet culture and its prevalence in society are especially felt by youth in sport, where weight and appearance are a focus. Most look normal! Sufferers from eating disorders are good at hiding it and coaches do not suspect there is a problem. The world's message is thinner, leaner, prettier. 80% of girls under 18 worry about body image and have been on some sort of diet.

India is taking the message to other youth by sharing her experience. She says that making Peace with Food is the most rewarding thing to do. Education and awareness are needed, including the coaches. Some of the signs are overtraining, extreme fatigue and isolation. She also speaks at middle and high schools and has had students come forward to say, "I do not feel alone." Her personal inspiration is, "if I could change one person's life."

Bill Fitzsimmons thanked India for sharing her very personal story with us. He asked what supports are in place to help. India said that there are online supports that are good, including chat rooms, a service offered by the "Looking Glass Program". This is especially helpful to those frightened to reach out for help. "Hand in hand" is a program offered where you meet with a volunteer on a weekly basis. Sufferers of mental illness need validation and need to be ready for recovery. It takes varying amounts of time to get there. Parents carry big influence in a kid's life, so kids are unwilling to talk to parents, who they do not want to disappoint. Coaches may need to approach parents with the child's permission. Kids need safe places to go, so online resources can be a big help.

India now admits that she is living an amazing life, travelling the world, and competing in high performance athletics; but there is more to her life than sports. She is going to school to become a paramedic; she loves art and the great outdoors. Her focus now is on being a well-grounded person.

President Bill showed us a short video on ski cross, a highly competitive sport, and thanked India for telling us about her personal challenges.

President Bill reminded us of the upcoming meetings on August 6 and August 10.



The Weekly Westerner

July 27, 2020

Bill Lawless announced a service project to package masks this week from your home before August 1. If you are interested contact Bill Lawless to volunteer.

Coming Events

August: Membership and New Club Development Month	
3	No Meeting Civic Holiday - August Long Weekend
5	Evening Zoom Past President's Reflections Series #1
10	Club Engagement F & F Committee update; New Club Developments
17	Water and Sanitation Tal Woolsey - CAWST
24	Club Engagement Updates and Discussions, New Initiatives
31	Club Engagement Updates and Discussions, New Initiatives