

# 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  
**Secretary:** Gail Williams **Treasurer:** Dan Pigeon  
**Directors:** Judy Cochran, Gord Cox, Darren Grierson, Barb Hames,  
Ken Montgomery, Drew Turnbull

## **Together We Are People of Action - Building Community**

July 6, 2020 Edition: 54.1 Reporter: Les Morgan Editor: David Williams

Following a minor technical issue with the link to join the meeting, **President Bill Fitzsimmons** opened his first club meeting of the new Rotary year at 12:20 pm. 41 participants were signed in.

President Bill warmly welcomed all attendees. Earlier in the day, he had attended his first all presidents meeting at which coping mechanisms and fundraising impacts and ideas during Covid-19 were shared. Our club has been managing as well as the other clubs.

While it was physically impossible to “pass the gavel”, Bill expressed his deep appreciation to **Past President Gerry Meek** for his leadership over the past year and to the old and new boards and, indeed, to all club members who were, and continue to be, key to our club’s success.

Bill’s theme for the year is “Engage in Fellowship and Service”. He will be experimenting with more team discussions and larger team roles. While we are meeting only virtually, we will be experimenting with team meetings in breakout rooms within Zoom.

**Tim Anderson** has taken on the role of speaker committee chair. He is open to hearing from any club member who has a suggestion with respect to a speaker theme, or a recommendation for a particular speaker.

The board is talking with Grey Eagle management about resuming our physical meetings. We are, however, still a long way from being able to resume as before.

### **Guest Speaker**

**Tony Knight** (Welcome, Tony!) introduced our guest speaker, **Jennifer McCue**. Jennifer is president and CEO of Bethany Care Centre. She was a major player in our Bethany Care Centre signature project, whom Tony first met several years ago when the signature project was first being considered.. She felt



immediately, he says, like an old buddy and she was tireless in working to develop the project and in bringing it to completion.

Jennifer's presentation described Bethany's journey through the pandemic, reminding us that we are still in the early stages of this environment. She expressed her sincere gratitude to RCCW and the combined force of Tony and **Clarence and Evelyn Buckley** in bringing the two organizations together. The financial contribution of RCCW and, more recently, the donation of art for the centre are greatly appreciated.

Across Alberta, Bethany has 1863 employees and accommodates more than 2000 seniors via 745 long-term care beds, 245 specialized programmes, 2080 supportive living clients and 738 affordable housing suites. The average client is 80 years old, and approximately 70% of them are experiencing some degree of cognitive disorder.

Jennifer shared a personal story of her mother who was diagnosed with Covid-19 in April. Shortly after lockdowns were initiated in her PEI care centre, her mother began to decline, rapidly becoming palliative. Jennifer managed to obtain permission, and all the necessary documents and requirements, to fly to PEI to visit her mom. Coming from outside the province, it took some persuasion to finally obtain permission to visit her mom for 20 minutes. Her mother passed 24 hours later. The burial service was limited to three people, but family and friends lined the streets in their cars to express their support.

While the total experience was horrific, Jennifer is firm in her belief that tight controls are essential for the greater good.

Bethany was well prepared to address the pandemic since they have had a pandemic emergency response plan in place for many years – a plan in which they conduct annual exercises. Indeed, they have plans in place to manage a wide variety of potential emergency or crisis situations.

The pandemic management plan is comprised of six levels, or stages, proceeding from Preparation through Initiation and Surge, Selective Prioritization, System Response, Recovery and Resumption.

Key decisions were taken very early on: the restriction of visitations and the imposition (despite union objections) of single-site workers. They experienced their first positive case on April 14 in a front line worker. The first case in a resident was detected on April 15. Since then, there have been 17 cases across their 1200 beds. No new cases occurred during May and June, but, unfortunately two staff have received a positive diagnosis since restrictions started to be lifted. Today, however, Bethany is Covid-free.



Care centres in Alberta generally do not have the same issues that have been widely reported in Ontario and Quebec. Bethany's operations, for example, have been audited 22 times.

Covid-19 did, however, significantly impact Bethany's operations. In mid-March with staff shortages, it was necessary to find staff to backfill 16 thousand shifts. In one day, 200 regular employees, approximately 30% of the workforce, were absent. Costs increased significantly with the need for PPE and sanitation requirements. The provincial government provided support (across the province) of \$170M.

Critical decisions were taken with respect to how to support Bethany staff. A Bethany Heroes programme was introduced to provide them assistance and support in a number of ways. Each staff was given a "photo tag" so they would not be a faceless entity behind a mask. Concerts were held outside residents' windows.

Now moving into the recovery phase, Bethany must determine how best to balance work from home capabilities versus office presence for corporate staff; how best to manage (family) visitation desires; how to strategize the maintenance or upgrade of their old buildings, and how to balance everything with maintaining safety. Operating protocols are largely under the direction of provincial authorities with some small single case discretion by the facility. There will continue to be challenges to manage single-site employment and to continue essential planning for a second wave of Covid-19. Changes may be required to the funding model currently in place. Additionally, potential federal reviews of the long-term care system may introduce new initiatives.

Jennifer will be forever grateful to everyone for their extraordinary support thus far, and she concluded her presentation with again expressing her huge thank you to RCCW.

**Bill Quinney** began to thank Jennifer for her impressive presentation when the Buckleys were able to join our meeting and continue.

Bill Fitzsimmons announced that **Anila Lee Yen** will speak to us next Monday on diversity. He offered his thought for the week: Change the world by being yourself.

We split into four breakout rooms, with each team to their own room. These breakout sessions are intended to allow the development and refinement of team functions. The Zoom technology functioned, but the team compositions were a little off. **David Williams** will eventually send the current team lists to club members.



**Coming Events**

<b>July: Stampede Parade and OK Cherries Month</b>	
6	Jennifer McCue, President and CEO of Bethany: Bethany's journey through the pandemic
13	Diversity and Rotary: Rotarian Anila Lee Yen
20	Five Avenues of Rotary: President Bill Fitzsimmons' program for the club.
27	India Sherrett: Olympian
<b>August: Membership and New Club Development Month</b>	
3	No Meeting
5	Evening Meeting: Past President Series #1
10	Vocational Services: Round-up and Discussion
17	TBA
24	TBA
31	TBA