



FOREST HILL HAPPENINGS

No 34

President: Stuart Williams

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STU'S SCRIPT

I hope you are all well in this "different" time. All the whingeing and complaining about partial lock-down is incredible. Our parents went through years of rationing, war-time restrictions. Nelson Mandela was not destroyed by his years of solitary confinement. We are even allowed to get outside. We will come out the other side. Who would be brave enough to guess at any permanent changes that will be made?

Amazing that two of us lost family members on the same day. Thinking of you Glenys. I really appreciated the thoughtful messages I received on the passing of my youngest brother Graeme. MND is a mongrel of a disease. The mind stays alert, the body just gradually closes down. The four Williams boys seemed almost bullet proof four years ago. All of us have had to face health issues. Poor Graeme said, " I wish I could go into hospital, have a big operation, and come out Ok." There is currently no cure or treatment for MND. Neil Daniher has the mildest of the 5 types. He has lived for 5 years plus. The average time after diagnosis is 18 months.

Stay safe, stay healthy. Stay connected to Rotary.

I thank the six members who joined our ZOOM meeting on Monday evening. I thank Assistant Governor Geoff for joining us as well.

If you are in contact with past exchange students, GSE team members or other people who have been associated with our club please contact them and ask them to tell us their experience of the COVID-19 measures being taken in their country. We can do a multi-national coronavirus report.

Stuart

INSIGHT TALK – BOB LASLETT

I was born during the Second World War at Snowtown (well before the Bank). To get me out of mum's hair I accompanied Dad as he picked up school children from outlying farms in a converted ute. On the way we would set rabbit traps and check them after school. Dad taught me in the last three years of primary school. We spent many happy hours playing cricket in the empty block next door with a stick of wood for a bat, a tennis ball and an empty petrol container for a wicket. Trips to Grandmas varied markedly, one lived through the back fence while the other entailed a day's journey to Allendale East often in the back of the aforesaid ute accompanied by my sister and the luggage. My only surviving Grandfather was the local greengrocer and my first employer. I was paid in "spiders" – lime milkshakes with a dollop of ice-cream.

At the age of eleven I left Snowtown for the mighty metropolis of Adelaide for secondary studies boarding with my aunt. Despite years of practice, I did not have a brilliant cricketing career there only making the fourth team in class cricket. (However, later I did play international cricket (queried by Andrew- he says with international people barefoot in Hong Kong for the Chinese University). Tennis therefore became my sporting interest and that interest has continued to the present day playing for many seasons with such luminaries as John McPhee, our worthy President Stuart and my grandsons. I had some interesting classmates – one became Deputy Premier and another a Professor of Physics.

Following in my father's footsteps I set out to become a secondary teacher. This did not eventuate although I often wonder how different life would have been if I had taken up my appointment at LeFevre Boys Tech. During my time at Adelaide Uni the Birthday ballot saw me doing three months National Service at Woodside Army camp – the fittest I have ever been. The change of date of a biology exam which affected most of the A football team saw my promotion to A grade amateur football for Teachers College which was televised on the ABC. We were coached by 'Chops' Mutton who later became cricket coach for South Australia- a great bloke.

Another "feature" of my uni years was that I happened to run across one Robert Guy who had a knack for poetry of sorts. Here is an example- The Bench of Lasellot- unfortunately there are more!

*1 On one side of the labor't'ry lie
Benches of Drewer and of Guy
Whose shining tops reflect the sky;
And past the shelves the floor runs by
To many-spotted Lasellot;
And up and down the people go
Gazing where the shambles grow,
Round a cess-pool there below,
The bench of Lasellot.*

*3. There he slops by night and day
In tattered coats with colours gay.
He has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on him if he stay
To clean the bench of Lasellot
He knows not what the curse may be
And so he sloppeth steadily,
And little other care hath he
This Robert Lasellot.*

*2. Professors whiten, doctors quiver,
Research students pale and shiver
At the crud which goes forever
In a tarry scunge-filled river
Flowing over Lasellot
Ten polluted silica towers
Dripping on the floor for hours
And the mouldering heap embowers
Young Robert Lasellot*

*4. To hide the bench's top from sight,
Is work in which he takes delight;
And often in the silent night
A glob of gunk in random flight
Lands on the bench of Lasellot
But once upon a wond'rous day
He lit the chrome-bath, and did say
He'd clean the mess that round him lay
Upon the bench of Lasellot*

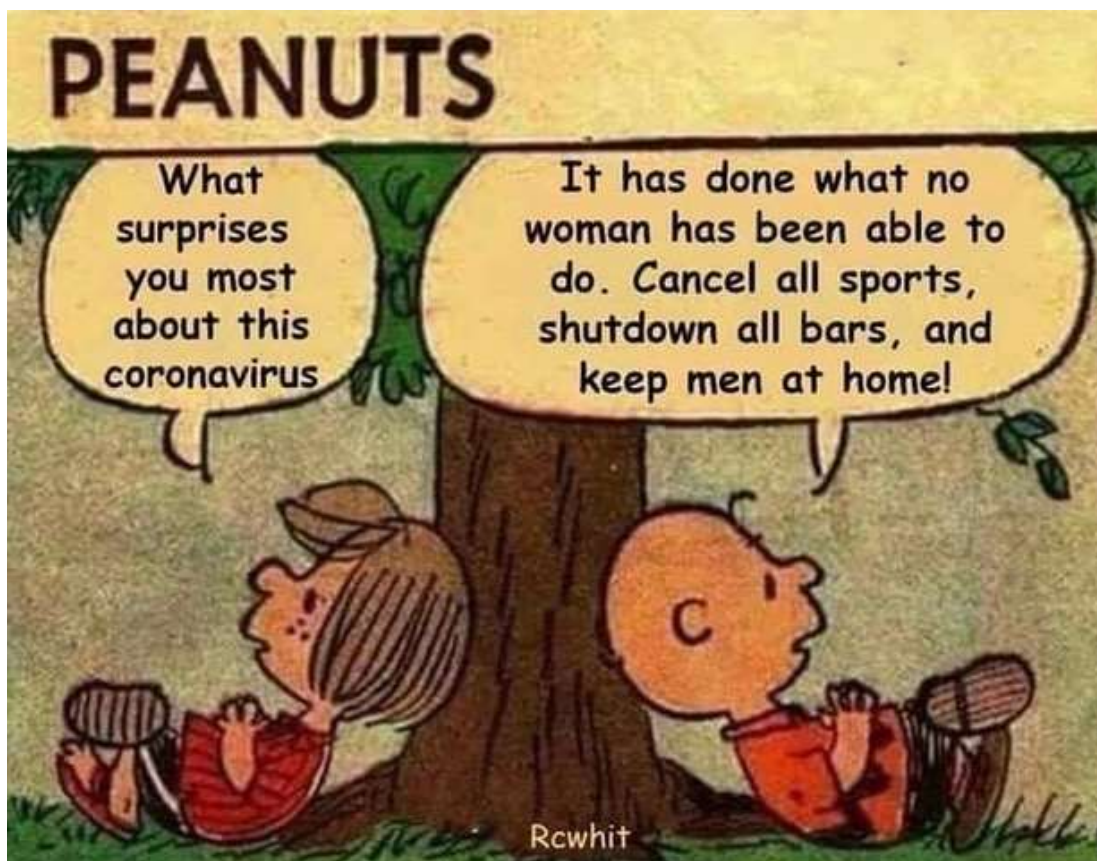
5. In the goob-encrusted beaker,
The red fluorescence waned still weaker
The song ceased from the tone-deaf shrieker, —
What ails the jovial porph'rin seeker,
The extroverted Lasellot?
Out flew the contents, splashing wide
The beaker cracked from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me!' cried
Poor Robert Lasellot.

After years languishing in the depths this “masterpiece” surfaced at a recent gathering of old Adelaide organic chemists at the NGV garden restaurant the day before it closed.

Enough of my ramblings. Life has been very good- thanks to many friends from the Uniting church, Rotary both here and overseas and from a long-term satisfying career at Swinburne that included plenty of travel. It goes without saying that Judy has given loving support and I have been blessed with close family, special children, their great spouses and caring grandchildren.

NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th April at 7.00pm in the Zoom Room. (Look out for an email around 6.50pm Please dress appropriately as we may be joined by several dignitaries.)



AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

From Lars Anthonisen in Denmark

He is doing fine, working from home and spends a lot of time in the garden with his kids... William 6 and Filippa 3. They do school for a couple of hours a day. William can read easy books. They are renovating their big house. Denmark has restrictions, but no masks. Only allowed 10 people together. See very few people, only family. See parents and parents in law. Shop once a week, trying to have a normal life..

Carmina from Mexico wrote:

Mexico is still in quarantine. Their businesses are expected to pay in full their employees. They are not getting any government support. She is home-schooling. She wrote: "the Teacher is going to kill the students, and the husband isn't here, he goes to his office thank god, because he could be murdered by the teacher too!!!!." She grows beautiful orchards. They are having virtual church services.

Good morning from California, Stuart:

I figured I would send a note here rather than posting a long letter on Facebook. Needless to say, life in California is different.

On the home front, Susan has not had a job outside of our home since I started this position here in Placerville 3 years ago, so she is not out of work like so many. Christina (13 now) and Andrew (9) are not in school. Right now, our school district is saying they may return the first week of May, but I am doubtful. Christina is upset because she was in her last year of what we call middle school (grades 6-8) and was looking forward to one last year of track at her school. She will be in high school (grades 9-12) in August when they return to school. She really misses her friends. She told us facetime is not a substitute for real time in person and we agree with her. We have allowed her to meet friends at the park near our house, but that is about it.

Andrew is disappointed that he will not get to play little league baseball this year. He also misses his friends.

Susan and I are fine. We feel blessed as I am not unemployed since I am in an essential profession. We are frustrated like many. As data comes out daily, many are starting to ask if this "lockdown" is really effective vs. directing those more susceptible to catching the COVID 19 virus (seniors and those with underlying conditions) to shelter in place. As you can imagine, it is unprecedented to tell citizens to stay home. In California, we have seen our economy completely crash in less than 1 month. We had less than 3% unemployment with jobs for everyone. Now, cities across the United States including New York, Chicago and Los Angeles look like ghost towns. I have a pit in my stomach each day I drive to my office without any traffic and few businesses open. I have many friends who are on edge, wondering if they are going to lose their job. Since we still have income, we try to get takeout food at least 1 or 2 times a week. Thankfully, we are both healthy with no underlying health conditions. Sue's mom lives about 10 minutes from us. She is 82, so we of course check in with her daily.

My parents live near the coast in Monterey County, about 75 miles south of San Francisco. My dad and I talk at least once a week. They are both healthy, but also considered seniors, so they are avoiding outside contact which is difficult as they are very social. Dad is fully retired, so he does not have to work under these conditions.

I do miss getting together with my friends as I do periodically. I usually meet different friends for lunch from my old department. I have another group of friends who I meet for pizza and beer every now and then. Sue and I meet friends for dinner out regularly and we have people over to our home for BBQs as the weather gets better. As you probably know, even Rotary is cancelled through this crisis, at least here in the United States. I belong to the Rotary Club of Folsom. We usually meet on Thursday evenings. I miss that along with all of my other regular interactions.

As you know, kids get bored easily. Susan and I are trying to get creative in finding activities for the kids. We do not want Christina and Andrew sitting on a screen all day long. Luckily, we live in an area with hundreds of miles of nice hiking trails. Hiking is allowed while maintaining social distances in small groups. We are in early spring here, so it is still cool and raining a few days a week. Since it is going to rain this weekend, I am going to teach both kids how to make some of my late grandmother's Mexican food. We are re-discovering the many board games we have in our home. Of course, we have Netflix and Amazon prime for movies. We get outdoors whenever possible.

As the police chief in a small city, my #1 priority is keeping my staff (and me) healthy. I personally know of several who have had the virus. Everyone has said it is like having a really bad flu for 4 days, then they start to feel better. I only have 19 officers on my force including me. If I lose 3-4 officers out sick, I would need to call our local sheriff's office (El Dorado County Sheriff's Office) to supplement my patrol force. I have talked with the Sheriff about that possibility. What is scary is there are now at least a dozen law enforcement officers across the country including 2 here in California, who have died due to complications from the COVID 9 virus. Several of these officers were younger than me and did not have any known underlying health conditions.

We have a completely new protocol for keeping our station clean and decontaminating our patrol cars at least twice daily, more if we actually arrested someone. We are only making felony arrests. If someone commits a lower level misdemeanor, they get a ticket.

I have done more Zoom, GoToMeeting and Google Hangout meetings over the last 2 weeks than I have in the last 10 years. As police chief, I am in a very social position where I enjoy interacting with people daily. It is tough not being able to see people in person outside of my station although I have outstanding staff in my department.

We are told the next 3 weeks (including this week) will be a "surge" of patients in our hospitals. We shall see. It sounds like California did a good job issuing the shelter in place order several weeks before the rest of the United States including New York City. I have some friends in the healthcare industry and I keep in contact with them to get a better idea of what may be ahead, regardless of what the local "experts" say. Right now, hospitals in the Sacramento region (Placerville is considered part of the Sacramento metro area) are at average capacity. They are all prepared for a surge such as the one happening in New York City right now.

That is about it Stuart. I think of my Australian friends often, especially when I see the brush fires. How are you and others doing in Victoria? Is everything shut down as well? I know your children are older, but are they doing ok?

This is a world crisis created by China. As I see it, this has been a good wake up call for the United States. We have allowed too much of our manufacturing to go overseas to China and other nations over the past 40 years. I learned last month that 90% of the antibiotics we use here are manufactured in China. That is a real problem. If there is a silver lining, it is that we will continue to bring back more and more of our manufacturing jobs to the United States. Since President Trump has been in office, many of our car companies, washing machine manufacturers and others have brought their factories back to the United States. That will continue. A little more than a year ago, we started exporting more oil than we imported which had not been the case for over 70 years. I also hope Americans see why we want to know who is coming and going to and from our country. Lastly, we need to figure out how to better screen everyone coming into America (including those returning from a trip abroad) for any communicable disease. I am sure Australia feels the same.

Thank you for writing Stuart. As I have told my family, we will get through this. Our country has face hardships throughout its history. Although there has not been anything like this in my lifetime (not even 9/11), we'll make it. There will be some positive changes moving forward from this crisis.

Take care, stay safe and stay healthy!

Jim Ortega

A message from Mariana Iparraguire, ex exchange student from Argentina. She and her family have been in Quarantine for 3 weeks. It has been tough but necessary. The numbers in Argentina are fairly low. Her family is doing great. They are looking forward to things getting back to normal.

WHY DID YOU JOIN ROTARY?

101 Reasons for Rotary Well almost!)

- Rotary gives members personal satisfaction
- Rotary is great for teaching members new skills
- Rotary members are never lonely, (or in self isolation, really)
- Rotary is a team effort
- Rotary members work towards improving the community.
- Rotary provides students with confidence building programs
- Rotary offers so many opportunities to youth
- Rotary assists youth in better international understanding
- Rotary gives students global opportunities
- Rotary provides students with leadership training

These were submitted by one of our members. See if you can add to them and we just might get to 101!!

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER IN ARIAL FONT, 12 POINT WITH JPEG PICTURES. OTHERWISE THE EDITOR GOES NUTS.