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ROTARY LITERACY MONTH

PASSING THOUGHTS OF A (VERY JUNIOR) RETIREE

By Bev Bird

I have now been retired for two months, two weeks and a few days. As these things go, I guess that makes me a fairly junior, inexperienced, still wet-behind-the-ears Learner Pensioner. At this early stage of the retirement process I must confess that I can't figure out what all the fuss is about; retirement gets such bad press: people make out that it's such a terrible, depressing experience. Let me tell you, if I'd known how great it was going to be, I'd have lobbied for early retirement ages ago. Here are some of my naive, juvenile Learner Pensioner's thoughts on the subject:

It's a fact that we modern-day folks waste a good deal of our adult lives complaining that we don't have enough time. It's become a monotonous refrain in the sound-track of our daily lives to grumble that we'd LOVE to be able to do such and such, if ONLY we had more time. Suddenly now, as a brand new retiree, I've come to the brilliant realisation that, finally, I have more time. More Time. A life-long wish come true! No need to scramble, no need to sweat ... just stop and smell the sea breeze. What a bonus.

Then, too, when my weary husband arrives home from work one evening, tired and exasperated from dealing with some irksome character at the office, for the first time it truly comes home to me how relieved I am that I no longer have to deal with such issues as part of my workaday life: no more stressful staffing situations to manage with tactful patience, no more difficult personalities around the workplace to placate with tolerance and grace. From now on I can more or less choose the people with whom I care to spend each lovely new day. Hallelujah - another huge bonus. Suddenly I feel a great weight lifting off my shoulders. I had not realised how draining that part of my job was becoming; it goes some way towards explaining the unexpected and overwhelming feeling of complete exhaustion - both mental and physical - that engulfed me for the first few weeks after stopping work.

And then, in addition, there's this wonderful new luxury, as a retiree, of starting to tick off the various boxes of my very protracted Wish List of all the activities I've been wanting for ages and ages to engage in - or, at least, to engage in more regularly: reading; writing; dancing; going to (even more) movies; upgrading my rusty French from pidgin to Parisien; finally completing all my neglected, half-finished travel journals chronicling numerous past journeys - and then, hopefully, setting off to explore lots of fresh new territories that will form the fascinating subject-matter of future ones; learning, once again, how to play bridge; spending unhurried time with special people and - just as importantly - special dogs; walking; running; drinking (more) champagne; having the time to quietly enjoy our new home ... and so on, and so on. All these things are starting to feature prominently in my new, freer lifestyle.

Thus far I've only discovered one rather disappointing downside to this whole happy scenario: no more chirpy little sms messages arriving on my phone towards the end of each working month, notifying me reassuringly that a new tranche of freshly printed banknotes has kindly been deposited into my bank account by my caring employer. Dammit - I knew there had to be a catch. But let's not forget that I am very keen to start up a new venture (as soon as I can find the time!) to provide practical training to junior attorneys fresh out of law



school, preparing them for the realities of coping out there in the scary real world of legal practice. This is an exciting prospect for me, a whole new challenging venture - and perhaps it will even have the pleasant end-result of bringing some of those crisp new banknotes back into my life again.

Considering how much I loved my job at UCT and considering that I only left because it was mandatory for me to retire then, I'm amazed that I haven't missed it at all. Because I knew I was leaving and because I had no choice in the matter, I found towards the end of my post that my mindset gradually and subconsciously shifted: some of the less charming aspects of the job, which I'd always been quite content to tolerate with equanimity because - face it - every job has its unpleasant parts, I now found intolerable: I had to stop myself from saying out loud, 'Thank goodness I never have to do THAT ever again!'; and other aspects which I'd always loved - particularly the teaching - I figured I could survive without. Or else replicate elsewhere - hence my concept of starting this new training venture.

On my last official work day (21st December, since the entire practice was due to close for the end-of-year break from then until 31st December, my actual retirement date) I completed my last few outstanding tasks, said my warm farewells to one and all within the practice, checked once more that my office was sparkling clean and shiny, and then formally removed my own name-plate from the door and replaced it with that of my successor, due to start at the beginning of January; I then locked my office door for the very last time, blowing a fond goodbye kiss as I did so, and ceremoniously handed over my keys to our admin. assistant on my way out. Then I walked out of the building, never once looking over my shoulder, either literally or metaphorically, either then or since.

I should remind you that this day, 21st December 2012, was the day the soothsayers and prophets of doom had declared would mark the End of the World, so I was not completely sure when I walked out of my office whether my retirement was to last for several years or perhaps only for several hours. I remember thinking I would be as mad as hell if the world went and ended that evening, before I'd even had a chance to enjoy one day of retirement: I wouldn't have spent all that time cleaning my office so diligently if I'd known that was going to be the case. Anyway, it all turned out okay, as it happens.

During my transition from working life to retirement I changed my email address from 'BevBird@UCT ...' to 'BevBird@me ...' - I think the new address nicely sums up my present state of mind as a junior retiree: Independent, Unfettered, Free, Happy. I think I'm going to like this new lifestyle of mine. But then, I'm only a Learner Pensioner: what do I know about retirement?

MEETING OF 7 MARCH 2012

Attendance

Membership	23
Present	20
Make ups	2
Apologies	0
Attendance	87%

Visitors: AG Roy Zazeraj, Hon. Member PP John Vivian .

Attendance to Biffy 082 468 7504 or aecon.e@mweb.co.za.

SLOTS

Biffy mentioned the Rotaract Camp at Camp Faraway, Noordhoek from 15-17 March. Subsequently followed up by a fully descriptive email. Please let her know numbers attending

Karen asks all prospective delegates for the visit to Norway in May to let her know proposed dates of arrival and departure.

Lina commended our car park attendant, Boebie on a difficult job well done.

Gordon is pleased to confirm that Plumstead Interact Club are back on track after a difficult directionless period.

Graham gave us the proceeds for the car park over the 4 days of Community Carnival: Friday: R860, Saturday: R1640. Total Wednesday to Saturday: R3140.

GUEST SPEAKER

AG Roy first of all thanked WRC for helping with marshaling duties for the Cycle Tour.

He then went on to describe current RI thinking regarding the well discussed topic of Club Membership.

DG Mike has openly stated that internationally, Rotary is stuck in a rut, repeating the same platitudes which clearly are not working to the extent they should. We have to look at Rotary not with our own eyes, but with new eyes.

Internationally Rotary membership has remained essentially static over the past 10 years at approx. 1.2 million worldwide.

In District 9350 we have lost 9% over the same period. Seven clubs were closed in this time; and although a number of new clubs have been chartered, they tend to be smaller than previously.

RI President Sakuji Tanaka said, " It's not enough to bring new members into Rotary. We want them to stay."

We must be proud to be Rotarians and ensure that our club is vibrant with good projects.

PROGRAMME

March 2013

Committee: van Wyk, Gowdy, Overbosch, Todd, Murphy, Klotz-Gleave

Thursday 14 **Normal meeting : Speakers: Visitors from Haugaland College, Norway.**

Wednesday 20 **Joint meeting at Rotaract. No meeting Thurs 21 - Human Rights Day**

Thursday 28 **Normal meeting due to public holiday the previous week : Speaker: Dennis Gowdy on his trip to Myanmar**

Friday 29 **Easter Friday / start of Easter weekend / Two Oceans Marathon**

April 2013

Committee: Barnard, Bird, Hovstad, Michalowsky, Wetmore

- Thursday 4** **Normal meeting: Speaker: Cathy Stagg on how to take good pictures (bring your cameras)**
- Friday 5** **Bingo at Rotaract**
- Thursday 11** **Normal meeting at Lavender Hill High School: Speaker: DR. RUBEN RICHARDS, company CEO, Executive Secretary of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, ex-deputy director of the Scorpions, visiting professor to Wits University's Graduate School of Public and Development Management, etc, etc. Topic: based around 'brokering a cease-fire deal with the gang leaders of Lavender Hill in November 2012'.**
- Thursday 18** **Joint meeting with Rotaract at Palms: Speaker: Mike Roberts (title to follow) (promises to be good)**
- Thursday 25** **Normal meeting: visit by GSE team from Japan**

DUTY ROSTER

	14 March	28 March	4 April	11 April	18 April
Sergeant	Overbosch	Cleveland	Wetmore	Todd	Barnard
Attendance Officer	Danckwerts	Danckwerts	Danckwerts	Danckwerts	Danckwerts
Wynpress Editorial	Bird	Van Eeden	Murphy	James	Klotz-Gleave
Minutes for Wynpress	Knight	Cleveland	Danckwerts	Knight	Cleveland
Compilation of Wynpress	Cleveland	Knight	Cleveland	Danckwerts	Knight
Door Duty	Murphy & Wetmore	Bredenkamp	Bird	Gowdy	Hovstad
Grace	Klotz-Gleave	Vivian	Lidgley	Barnard	Bird
Loyal Toast	Williams	Wetmore	Barnard	Bird	Danckwerts
International Toast	Bird	Lidgley	Barnard	Hovstad	James
Speaker Introduction	TBA	Van Eeden	Gowdy	Orsmond	Overbosch
Speaker Thanks	van Wyk	Todd	Van Eeden	Wetmore	Murphy

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE YOUR ROSTERED DATE, PLEASE SWAP WITH ANOTHER ROTARIAN AND INFORM THE DUTY SERGEANT

JACKPOT

The jackpot stood at R2 860 (less R1 000 for visitors and less R500 for club members). Roché's name was drawn but he only managed to reduce the pack to 11 cards by destroying the Ace of hearts. Karen won the attendance prize of R35 (mostly in coppers!).

PRESIDENT'S QUOTE

Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.

- *Groucho Marx - American comedian (1890 to 1977)*

TAILPIECE

A few years after I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me good from evil, and Dad taught me to obey. But the stranger... he was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.) Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home - not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our long time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad didn't permit the liberal use of alcohol but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked ... and NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name?....

We just call him 'TV.'