

COMMUNITY NETWORKER No 18/2017-8

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of themselves:

Of the things we say or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Meeting 13th November 2017

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast the Rotary Club of Ypres in Belgium which was the site of some of the bitterest fighting in the Great War, following a decision by General Douglas Haigh to capture the village of Passchendaele and proceed then to knock out a German submarine base and get rid of some of the U boat menace. The attack had begun on 18th July 1917 with a barrage using 3,000 guns, which fired more than 4 million shells. The infantry had gone in on 31st July and in the campaign, which resulted in the capturing of Passchendaele village, the British lost 310,000 men and the Germans 260,000.

Our Guest

Our guest today, introduced by PP Phillip, was Geoff Roberson, who has practised law in Parramatta for 40 years. Geoff, from Stacks Lawyers, whose founding principal, Don Champion, was a founding member of our club. Geoff's own father-in-law was the headmaster of James Ruse High School in Carlingford, a school which set the template for the selective school system. Geoff has specialised in commercial litigation. He is a member emeritus of the NSW Law Society and a former deputy chancellor of Western Sydney University. Geoff has had a long acquaintance with Bob Rosengreen, whom Geoff met when Bob was a "computer entrepreneur" at the firm, Baillieu and Baillieu in 1969. It was with delight during our meeting that President Natalie invested Geoff as a Paul Harris Fellow.



President Natalie congratulating our newest PHF

The Christmas Tree Sales

PP Phillip handed round a roster sheet to be filled in by members for the selling shifts, to start on 2nd December. The roster will then be passed onto Parramatta Daybreak Rotary Club so some of its members can volunteer.

The RYLA Candidate

PP Keith said there was only one candidate for the RYLA camp. She is Vanessa Dixon was from Baulkham Hills and had come through the website. She will be interviewed at the ARH offices on Wednesday 21st December.

Christmas Celebrations

The club will hold its Christmas party on Friday 7th December at either Zahra on the River restaurant or the Port Bar Restaurant in Parramatta. **Write the date in your diary and also advise your partner.**

The club will have its Christmas lunch on 18th December.

Message from FOLIA

FOLIA has sent a thank you message to our club for our support of FOLIA, which operates for disadvantaged children in Bangladesh. It said that at the annual dinner in August, it raised \$17,717. FOLIA was the main source of funding for the LAMB Rehabilitation Unit. Janie Robson, manager of the unit, sends her thanks. LAMB had been involved in relief efforts in the area's worst flooding in 20 or 30 years. It had assisted more than 21,000 people directly affected by the floods.

Club RAWCS Project - St Peters Junior School – Gulu – Northern Uganda

PP Keith has received a further email from Robert Opira with more updates and photos of current development.

The new classrooms have now been completed. The Year7 candidates have completed their exams – a larger number than last year.

Further funds have been transferred to the school to enable fencing of property to be upgraded and for the purchase of text books for students.



New Classrooms



Year 7 students

Our Challenging (And Frightening) Technological Future

Geoff Roberson said our society was confronted by an “exponential” technological development which would see many professions change beyond recognition and would see robots replacing humans in many jobs. Even the legal profession faced challenges in this area. The possibility of robots replacing humans was only three percent, but the way services were delivered would change. A lot of minor jobs would be taken over by robots. Delivery of services through process would be gone. He was involved in a debt recovery business but the need for lawyers there was minimal. Development had gone to such an extent that people often did not have to get off their butt, even to go to the office. Skype enabled people to speak to each other face-to-face. Medical information and advice could be given to people in remote communities. He had been to a court in Sydney where parties from Melbourne and Brisbane appeared but not in person.

Accountants were finding that people were doing the work themselves. There were 34,000 accountancy firms in Australia at the moment but 45 percent of them employed less than 20 people and most were not profitable. An authority had said some years ago that 50 percent of professionals worked 50 hours a week for less than \$50,000 a year. Most were doing minor compliance work. A lot of that minor accounting work was being done for them, and it was being done more cheaply, faster and more accurately. A lot of professionals were looking to their business as their superannuation but they were not seeing the potential of technological change. Geoff cited a study that had been done on behalf of the NSW Law Society. There were now 30,000 solicitors in New South Wales where in 1990 there were only 8,000. And universities were turning out more and more graduates all the time. Would there be enough work for them?

“We have had our first fully electronic conveyancing where it was done entirely on-line,” he said. Previously the papers would have been passed onto the agent of the buyer who would then sign the contract and it would go back to the bank and then it would be settled in the suite where the lawyer had the purchaser or vendor or the outgoing mortgagee or incoming mortgagee. From 1st July next year a new system called PEXA, funded by the Macquarie Bank, would come into operation and it was mandatory that lawyers belonged to it. It was an online platform that would allow transactions to be completely quickly and easily. It would feature electronic signatures and electronic transfer of funds. Geoff said lawyers were going to have to adapt. It was no good saying: “It is not going to affect me.” Firms that had taken that attitude had gone out of business. Lawyers would have to adapt to the technological world, and so would their clients.

Geoff said that dramatic changes could be seen elsewhere, for example the way Uber had crashed in on the taxi industry. It now had 1,300 staff and did not own a cab. In the same way, Air B&B had crashed in on the hotel industry in a big way without owning a hotel. Other businesses which provided information for a fee found that information was being now supplied free-of-charge. A real estate wanting to closely examine a potential site could buy a drone for \$75 and do it himself. 3D printers had come into being which were revolutionising the production process. Manufacturing costs would drop. The next five years would show a huge development in this area. Sometimes the technological advance was catching investors out, such as the firm that invested massively in mapping technology but did not see the potential of mobile phones.

The use of the internet-connect devices was skyrocketing, with huge implications. Ten years ago there were 500 million internet-connected devices. There were now 8 billion and by 2020 there would be 30 billion. In 2010, there were 1.2 billion people on-line. In 2020 there would be 5 billion. The result was that information was so freely available that a retailer could tell a customer what he bought last week. Now, information being collected was being utilised by some of the connected companies. He had seen the banks in England take over the probate business which was being

handled through a legal firm. The banks had invested successfully and now free on-line advice could be given to people wanting to do probate applications themselves. The technological advance and the profusion of information now meant that some robots were able to answer, as when someone asked a question of google. The result was that businesses that had dealt in the acquisition and parting of knowledge were now struggling.

Geoff said that for the future, all he could say was that one would have to be “observant, agile and flexible”. “I think our profession will remain,” he said. People owning the business will still be there. But it is going to be a different future.”

Next Regular Luncheon Meeting – Monday 27th November.

Speakers will be representatives from Dixon Advisory, a leading financial advisory firm, speaking on recent superannuation changes and effects on SMSF’s.

Joke of the Week

Prince Charles was driving along a country road in England when he ran over a hedgehog. Charles, being very keen on conservation, stopped and looked at the mess on the road and wondered whether he could revive the poor creature. The Archangel Gabriel appeared and told him that God had decided to intervene in Charles’ life and grant him a wish. Charles responded immediately by saying: “Can we restore the hedgehog?” The archangel withdrew and came back with the advice that God, though he could do just about anything, was stumped when it came to restoring the hedgehog. God had previously been able to do all things in creation, but with this one, He had finally met his match. But God would give him a second wish. Charles thought for a moment, then said: “Can God make Camilla beautiful? The archangel withdrew and after a long pause, returned and said: “Can we just have a look at that hedgehog again?”

For Your Diaries

17th November. District AGM will be held at the Liverpool Catholic Club

20th November. There will be no lunchtime meeting. The meeting has been transferred to Rotary Foundation Dinner, Blacktown Workers’ Club

2nd December. Start of Christmas tree sales on Castle Hill Road

7th December. The club will have a Christmas party either at Zahra on the River restaurant in Paramatta or at Parramatta’s Port Bar restaurant.

18th December. The club will have its Christmas lunch.

2nd January 2018. RYLA camp at Yarramundi commences

2nd – 4th March District 9675 Conference at Mudgee. Registrations now open.
<https://www.trybooking.com/311829>

17th March 2018. A Peace Conference was being held at the Sydney Town Hall
Registrations
<https://arinex.eventsair.com/rippc-2018/form1/Site/Register>