



HOWZAT!



The Rotary Club of Newlands

The Club that Appeals



PRESIDENT	TERRY LANCASTER
Editor	Janey Ball
Email	howzat@newlands.org.za
Website	www.newlands.org.za
Facebook	www.facebook.com/NewlandsRotary



Apologies before 10:00 on a Monday to Heidi Andersson, please.

COMMENT: PUTTING CORONA-VIRUS into PERSPECTIVE

(Dr Leandri Hattingh in the Daily Maverick, via Wybe Meinesz)

At the moment the hospitals are standing empty and we are wasting precious time, allowing the country's economy and the spirit of its people to bleed profusely. Balancing the spread of Covid-19 against social and economic ruin is a dangerous game, but we are at the crease and the ball is heading for our wickets.

I started drafting this piece on the eve of the announcement that [one of the most extreme lockdowns](#) in the world will be eased. I have since taken comfort in the initial outline of a phased, nuanced approach by the government, that aims to balance the risk of Covid-19 deaths and an acutely overrun health care system with (mainly) the economic ramifications of a lockdown. It was encouraging to also see consideration given to "the well-being" of people, and what appeared to be an inclusive public consultation process.

Alas, the devil is in the details, as we have since learnt, and the same, seemingly insurmountable problem that has plagued this government during its entire reign, including its handling of the Covid-19 crisis to date, is that things fall flat at implementation. There is a clear discord between the theoretic, perceived intention, and the actual experience of the South African on the street (or in this case, cowering in his/her home).

Most South Africans feel a sense of reassurance, comfort, hope and even pride when listening to President Cyril Ramaphosa outlining the high-level plans, only to be replaced by fear, distrust, anxiety and a growing despair when the bombardment by senior representatives of the National Command Council ensues while they flesh out the details. It is then we realise the principles of the plan may not be threading through to implementation. What is said is not being done. Not dissimilar to how we've come to know all politics in this country.

It may have served us to consider questions of morality from the outset, but when faced with a sudden, unknown, mortal threat, urgent, pragmatic decision-making leaves little space for such considerations. We rely on existing laws to protect us in these instances. Of relevance here, specifically, are the Bill of Rights and Disaster Management Act. But legislation can only go so far in deciding what is right and wrong, especially in unprecedented and complex circumstances. And if ever we've found ourselves in such a situation, it is now.

Now that we have passed the initial fight-or-flight phase of the threat and settle into dealing with a challenge we recognise will be present for some time to come, it is time we investigate questions around morality. This may help us decide which decisions to challenge, and on what grounds. When the dust settles, it may also help us revise our existing laws to better prepare us for future, similar challenges.

Consider the last time you went to the supermarket before lockdown – think of the people you saw: children, families, parents, grandparents, friends, young people, car guards, beggars, workers. Now imagine you have a potentially life-threatening illness. Imagine there is a cure available for your illness, but it is extremely expensive, and you can't afford it. Imagine you could round up and ask all those strangers you saw that day at the supermarket to give up their jobs and livelihoods so that you may buy your cure. Would you? Could you expect their children to die of hunger for your sake?

Let's imagine that in addition, this disease of yours can only be cured if you are not to have contact with any other human for an interminable amount of time. Could you expect these strangers to stay in their houses or shacks or cardboard shelters until you are cured? To not come out to attend the funerals of their family members, access basic healthcare, or even just for a breath of fresh air? To die alone when they themselves get ill, to not be let out to take care of their own family members? Some may answer "yes". But can you force them to do any of these things? Or phone the police and get them to force it upon them? And watch while they [beat them to death with sjamboks](#)?

You and your fellow supermarket attendees may well enter into an agreement after some discussion. They may offer some of these things out of a sense of duty to a fellow citizen; a sense of humanity towards you. But you will probably respect their rights to refuse all of them. And if you do come to an agreement, there would likely be terms on the limits of how long they are willing to endure this for, and to what extent. The decision, however, is being taken by a third party on behalf of all of you. It has been decided – in your name – that all of these people shall make these sacrifices. Do you feel morally entitled to this? Do you feel blameworthy? Does this third party have the moral capacity and agency to make this decision on your behalf?

This is our current reality. Not at the scale of supermarket attendees, but of an entire country. The expectations from ordinary citizens go beyond the ones mentioned above – South Africans are also being forced to give up their rights to bodily integrity by being subject to medical testing, treatment and [quarantine against their will](#). Their right to freedom of expression has been limited by the regulation regarding the generation or spread of fake news. Their rights to access healthcare and education have been curtailed. The government is deciding all of our fates with day-by-day decisions which appear to, at times, change on a whim (refer to the [cigarette ban debacle](#)), and we have very little say in it – both the fraction of society at risk of dying from Covid-19, and the majority of nearly 60 million South Africans who may eventually get infected and shake off the virus, but suffer the repercussions of the lockdown for generations to come.

It is true that we endow the organs of state with the power to make these decisions on our behalf by electing them into power. Of concern is that the contract we have with the government to uphold our best interest in the form of the Constitution appears to be increasingly eroded and undermined as this crisis unfolds.

The counter-argument is that the government will be providing for the basic needs of those they're forcing to relinquish their rights to take care of themselves. It is hard to suppress a cynical smirk after writing that. I made the same smirk when President Cyril Ramaphosa announced in all earnest that no corruption will be tolerated in this effort, during his very first Covid-19 address to the nation. We now know [how that turned out](#). The quantum aside (a full R350 for unemployed persons who don't qualify for other UIF payments!), I remain sceptical about this government's ability to care for us. It is abundantly clear not only from its history pre-Covid-19 – most South Africans have got used to providing their own supply of, or doing without, electricity and water – but also in the weeks during the lockdown thus far, that despite the *prima facie* good intentions, the government lacks the insight, foresight, maturity, finesse and sense of servitude to execute an efficient, effective, sensitive and well-timed intervention.

They've thus far failed in the delivery of [interventions](#) meant to salve our wounds while they become gaping and spew blood. They also find it seemingly impossible to keep politics out of it – refer to the decision to [allocate relief in the tourism industry according to B-BBEE](#) principles.

How much longer should we excuse them and wait for them to try again? One thing they have not failed in is coming down as hard as possible on ordinary citizens – making sure that no "luxury" (looking at that pair of socks behind the tape in the supermarket) is allowed, that no one is spared from suffering as ministers take free reign in decreeing new rules ([occasionally unlawful](#)) at their whims, and that [all available force](#) is employed to bully every South African into submission. Is this justified? Is it morally acceptable?

I suggest that it is not. When weighing harms and benefits, most people will intuitively turn to the principle of utilitarianism: in a scenario where we have to choose between the lesser of two evils, we must choose that which will result in the most benefit to the most people, or, conversely, the least harm to the least amount of people. At this stage it should be clear that an extreme, protracted lockdown in South Africa [will harm more people](#) – now and in generations to come – than it would benefit the few that may be protected against dying from severe Covid-19 and an acutely overrun health care system. Yet the government persists in touting the line that Covid-19 deaths will result in a collapsed economy. They have yet to provide the evidence supporting this claim.

Regardless of the utilitarian considerations, most societies also agree through expression in their moral codes and legislation, that certain human rights are inalienable. Basic human rights and freedoms are the reasons thousands of people over centuries have fought and died in wars and revolutions. Their absences are what societies reserve for their most dangerous criminals. They are central to what we consider to be lives worth living. The [Bill of Rights](#) makes provision for limitation on some of these rights, but only under very strict conditions. Limitation must be “reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors, including (a) the nature of the right; (b) the importance of the purpose of the limitation; (c) the nature and extent of the limitation; (d) the relation between the limitation and its purpose; and (e) less restrictive means to achieve the purpose”.

These conditions are echoed in the [Disaster Management Act](#), where regulations may only be issued “to the extent that this is necessary for the purpose of (a) assisting and protecting the public; (b) providing relief to the public; (c) protecting property; (d) preventing or combating disruption; or (e) dealing with the destructive and other effects of the disaster”. It is ironic that we may have created a situation where the lockdown itself has become a disaster worthy of such interventions.

Ed: Dr Leandri Hattingh is a Constantia Rotarian. She is a medical doctor with masters degrees in applied ethics and public mental health. She was a fellow of the African Mental Health Research Initiative (AMARI) at the University of Cape Town. She has several years of experience in managed care where she focused on improving mental health care access and quality, as well as the risk management of other chronic illnesses. The opinions contained in this article are her own. It was first published in the Daily Maverick on 6 May 2020.

MINUTES of the ONLINE ORDINARY MEETING, 4th MAY 2020

Scribe: Tony Davidson

The meeting was opened by Sergeant Janey.

Terry then welcomed Willi Watson from Tygerberg.

Vanessa eloquently stated the Four-Way test and was followed by Andy saying grace and proposing a toast to RI and those supporting the hungry.

The virtual spoon was in Corinne’s possession. As she wasn’t present this evening, she had asked Janey to present the spoon to Jeanine for her outstanding work in organising the feeding scheme.

Shân and Jenny presented their experience on RFE to Mumbai – D3141. They were certainly enthusiastic about their experience. All their senses were stimulated with the vibrance of the city and surrounds and were overwhelmed with the love and generosity shown by their hosts.

Eight clubs from D9350 were represented on the RFE and they were hosted by six clubs in Mumbai. They visited a number of Rotary projects and had the opportunity to tour.

Highlights included attending the district “Bollywood” gala and Mahatma Gandhi’s house. Wonderful slides were presented which showed some of the sites they visited as well as the incredible diversity of the area – from ancient to modern, poverty-stricken to modern skyscrapers.

The members asked numerous questions and Melinda added her experiences of visiting Mumbai as well.

Spots:

- Richard informed us that the NSRI charity wine auction will be held online this year. 50 lots of wine are available.
- Geraldine and Jenny had a zoom meeting this morning with a Melbourne Rotary club – they have so far donated about R2700 but, after the meeting, there is an expectation of further donations.
- Jeanine reported back on the food distribution project > R300,000 has been raised for food distribution. Decisions have been made to spend most of the money on the unregistered ECD projects in Langa. A number of other projects will also be supported.
- Pieter is looking for more laptops – particularly for our bursary students.

President Terry's spot revolved around the three resolutions from District which need to be passed at POETS. Jenny will be representing us as our president-elect. There were no objections or discussion about the issues:

1. The new levy will increase by R2 in 2020/21
 2. We agree with the financial statements which have been distributed.
 3. Oudsthoorn will be the venue of next year's district conference.
- Jenny was instructed to vote for the resolutions at Poets.
 - Jenny will be having a virtual induction.
 - There were no birthdays, wedding anniversaries or anniversaries in joining Rotary this month.

The meeting concluded with happy rands.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



FUTURE FIXTURES

MAY: YOUTH SERVICE MONTH

- 18 Ordinary Meeting (*The Secret Lives of Three Rotarians*)
- 20 Board Meeting
- 25 Business Meeting
- 30 D9350 Zoom Meeting (2pm)
COVID-19 and Rotary - club responses, fundraising and plans going forward. An open forum to hear what your club is up to, exchange ideas and strategize for the year ahead. Attendance is limited to 300.

JUNE: ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS MONTH

- 1 Partners' Meeting
- 6 D9350 Virtual District Assembly (9am)
Virtual Assembly. DGE Carl-Heinz and his team will look at the year ahead
- 8 Ordinary Meeting
- 15 Ordinary Meeting
- 17 Board Meeting
- 20 D9350 Virtual District Conference and DG Induction
A look back at the past Rotary year, exchange of ideas, Formal (online) induction of DGE Carl-Heinz and a link up to the Virtual Convention that opens the same day. The conference time will be confirmed once we have the convention program and times.
- 20-26 RI Virtual Convention ([Online](#))
- 22 Business Meeting
- 29 Ordinary Meeting

UMPIRES and SCORERS

	18 May 2020 <i>Ordinary</i>	25 May 2020 <i>Business</i>	1 June 2020 <i>Partners</i>
Sergeant	Wendy Goddard	Graham Lowden	Lew Botha
Four-Way Test	Jeannine Ibbotson	Johan Beukman	Corinne Hudson
Grace and Loyal Toast	Shelley Finch	Jana Forrester	Vanessa Rousseau
Attendance	Jamie Hart	Nora See	Wybe Meinesz
Fellowship			
Minutes	Ian Pursch	Geraldine Nicol	Chris Beech
Intro speaker			
Thank speaker			
Comment	Melinda Stapleton	Michael Walwyn	Andy Ismay



BIRTHDAYS	18 May	Dottie Leveque
ANNIVERSARIES	18 May	Graham and Lynne Finlayson
JOINED ROTARY	19 May	Rochelle Malherbe
WOODEN SPOON		Jeannine Ibbotson

OFFICE BEARERS

President	Terry Lancaster	Environment	Tony Davidson
President-Elect	Jenny Ibbotson	International Service	Jenny Ibbotson
Secretary	Janey Ball	Membership	Graham Finlayson
Treasurer	Peter Ennis	New Generations	Vanessa Rousseau
Club Services	Heidi Anderson	Public Image	Shelley Finch
Community Service	Corinne Hudson	Rotary Foundation	Mike Walwyn
Entrepreneurial	John Stephenson	Vocational Service	Jeannine Ibbotson

QUOTE of the WEEK

“My only great qualification for being in charge of the Navy is that I am very much at sea.”

- Sir Edward Carson (1854-1935) (First Lord of the Admiralty) -

AND the LAST WORD (with thanks to President Terry and Bored Panda)

