

# The Gentlemen's Club: putting 1,000 years of experience to good use



KATHRYN GREENAWAY, MONTREAL GAZETTE

[More from Kathryn Greenaway, Montreal Gazette](#)

([HTTP://MONTREALGAZETTE.COM/AUTHOR/GREENAWAY29](http://montrealgazette.com/author/greenaway29))

Published on: January 5, 2016 | Last Updated: January 5, 2016 2:11 PM EST



MONTREAL, QUE.: JANUARY 4, 2016 -- Kirkland city councillor John Forson, standing, with members of a Gentlemen's Club at Manoir Kirkland where he volunteers, in Kirkland, Montreal, Monday January 4, 2016. The club has around 12 members between the ages of 75 and 94. They gather to organize fundraisers and socialize. (Phil Carpenter / MONTREAL GAZETTE). *PHIL CARPENTER / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

Every Friday afternoon Kirkland councillor John Morson arrives at the Chartwell Manoir Kirkland for a meeting of The Gentlemen's Club.

The 12 members don their Gentlemen's Club baseball caps and make their way to the conference room. Some need walkers, others don't hear as well as they once did, but they all gather to socialize, debate and plan. Morson established the club in November 2014 to

encourage men living at the seniors' residence to make new friends and to get involved in a good cause.

To clear up any confusion, this Gentlemen's Club is about a fair exchange of ideas and fundraising. It is not about gathering to watch scantily-clad ladies, although club members do get a chuckle out of the possibility of the confusion.

With an average age of 84.5 — 75 being the youngest and 94 being the oldest — the 12 men bring a combined 1,014 years of life experience to the table. They have opinions. They have ideas. And they know how to deliver.

|

Their inaugural wine and cheese benefit raised \$800 for a school being built in the Dominican Republic. Next, donations from residents of the seniors' facility, totalling \$230, were collected in a giant water bottle and presented to the Quebec chapter of the Salvation Army. A second wine and cheese event raised \$700 for the West Island Women's Shelter and, last month, the men organized a casino night that raised \$1,550 for the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation.

This week Morson presented the cheque to the Lakeshore General Foundation's events coordinator Anne-Marie Milard and foundation board member and Kirkland councillor Tony Di Gennaro while the Gentlemen sat around a table and talked a bit about themselves and about how joining the club has improved their quality of life.

Retired Montreal police officer Lorne McNeil, 75, moved into the Manoir in September and joined the club without hesitation. He was front and centre casino night, making sure everything ran smoothly. McNeil was stationed for almost 34 years in the West Island — many of those years spent in Pierrefonds working as the youth-care supervisor.

"Joining The Gentlemen's Club is the best thing I could have done," McNeil said. "We all come from different backgrounds, but we're all in the same boat."

These are men who have retired from busy careers. The children are grown and gone. Some have lost their spouses. Moving to an unfamiliar residence can be overwhelming. Speaking in generalities, women tend to find it easier to gravitate toward social activities, while men will often opt to retreat and, in doing so, become isolated.

"The first time I visited the Manoir I saw that these guys weren't doing anything," Morson said. "They weren't interested in (arts and crafts activities), so they stayed in their rooms or fell asleep in the lobby."

The group is diverse.

Irwin Asmono, 75, was born and raised in Indonesia and travelled to Quebec to see Expo '67.

"I asked a gentleman at the métro for directions and he offered me a job," Asmono said. "Then, I met my wife and never left." Asmono worked for years as a cost accountant for Bombardier.

Bruno Gimber, 78, came to Canada from Germany when he was 19 years old because he didn't want to join the army. He ran a business that installed the woodwork in the Steinberg grocery stores.

John Carmichael, 94, is a retired mechanical engineer and a RCAF veteran. "When I was 19, I was going over to Germany," he said, turning to Gimber with a grin.

Bogdan Muszycki, 82, worked in the garment business; Russ Colyer, 88, was an airplane mechanic; Walter Bielmacz, 94, came from Poland to open a restaurant; Ted Kalaski, 91, was an engineer with Hydro-Québec; Jean-Paul Goyer, 89, was an investigator for CP; André Côté, 88, was an economist with the National Energy Board and is a Korean War veteran. Côté's career years were spent in Ottawa, but he was born in Montreal and his support for the Canadiens hockey team never wavered.

"No Ottawa Senators for me," he said.

Ninety-three-year-old Gerry Leach was a long-haul trucker and Bruce McBean, 80, worked in finance and now functions as the club's treasurer. He collects \$5 from each member every meeting. The money is put in a pot and used for monthly outings, be it bowling or visiting a local restaurant. But the club's primary goal is to raise money for those in need.

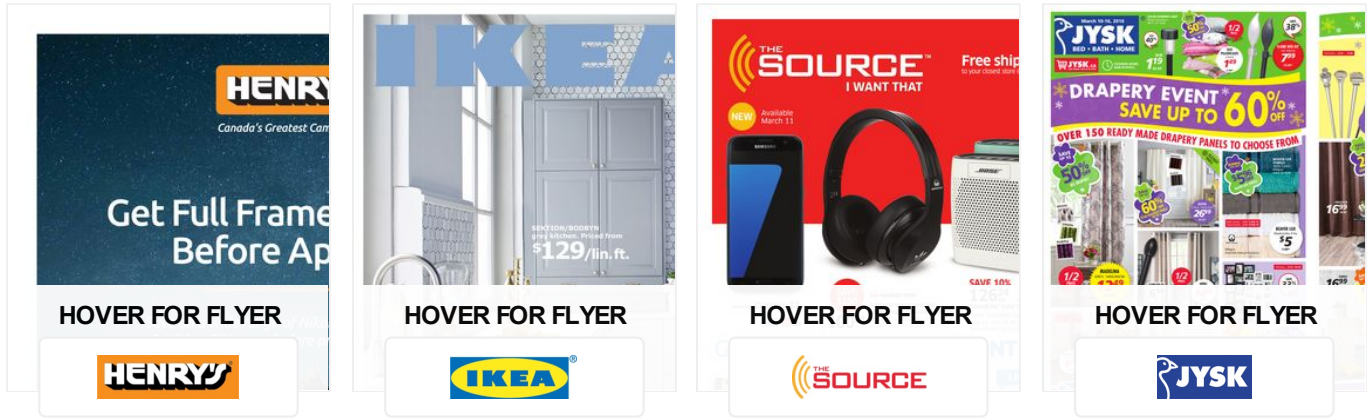
"John (Morson) is the glue that keeps us together," McBean said. "We couldn't do what we do without him."

"The club is a way for me to give back and it makes me feel good," Morson said.

The order of business for this Friday's meeting is the next fundraiser. Any decision will be made in a gentlemanly fashion. And then it will be time for a glass of wine and maybe a bit of cheese.

[kgreenaway@montrealgazette.com](mailto:kgreenaway@montrealgazette.com)  
(<mailto:kgreenaway@montrealgazette.com>)

## Montreal Flyers



## Comments

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. Visit our FAQ page (<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/story.html?id=7195492>) for more information.

([HTTP://WWW.POSTMEDIA.COM](http://www.postmedia.com))

© 2016 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

Powered by WordPress.com VIP (<https://vip.wordpress.com/>)