

Volunteer Impresario

Active retiree brings popular shows to city stages.

Words and photography by Mike Douglas

On April 10, a fond tradition ended at the Port Credit Secondary School. The Adventure Travel Series, presented by the Rotary Clubs of Mississauga West and Lakeshore, welcomed 150 people to their last show in the school's comfortable movie theater on Mineola Road east of Hurontario Street.

Here, this travelogue series (presented six times annually) has flourished for most of its 47 years. "The audiences are not what they used to be, though," says Pieter Kool, the Rotary volunteer who has been producing the show for 22 years.

Kool took on the presidency of the Travelogue Association of North America to help set up a charity circuit for travelogue speakers. When they appeared in Mississauga, they often stayed as guests in Kool's home in the Sheridan Homelands, where he and his late wife raised three daughters. "One of the things I'll miss the most is getting to know these interesting people," Kool notes. But the numbers weren't high enough to make money for the charities that benefit from the proceeds of the evening.

Kool won't have much time to miss it—he has to complete his volunteer work selling advertising for the *Sheridan Times* community magazine, and then he'll promote the Sheridan Homelands' community yard sales on May 31 (from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.).

In June, the Amacon Mississauga Ribfest meetings will increase for Kool as he consults with other volunteer talent bookers for Rotary ribfests across southern Ontario. On behalf of Rotary, he will hire 16 bands for this year's Ribfest at Celebration Square (from July 17 to 20). Ribfest has become the Rotary of Mississauga's biggest fundraiser. Kool will spend almost all of it sitting side stage, making sure the bands are well taken care of.

The following week, Kool will oversee the Shakespeare in the Park production in Thornlodge Park on July 23 and 24. Hundreds of Sheridan Homelands community members will come out to enjoy this year's version of Kool's show.

For most people, May through September is cherished summer time, but for Pieter Kool and so many other fine spirits across this city, it's volunteer season. And we are grateful.

"I enjoy hearing from the audience about what a great show it was and how they enjoyed a nice evening. It's their satisfaction that I, uh," he bites his lip emotionally and smiles, "I have great times."

In 2012, Pieter Kool won the Laurie Pallett Patron of the Arts Award at the MARTYs.



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