Royal City Men's Club

Minutes General Meeting

January 22nd, 2026

Ron East – Secretary

Meeting convened at 9:55 AM, Warren Gregg, President presiding

Number of members present 68

Membership Committee Chair Martin Alderwick introduced 3 new members who have joined the Club

Doug Annis
Kevin Churchyard
George Coutts

Activities Committee represented by Richard Evans

Speaker: Dave Adsett, Title of talk:

"Democracy is losing favour to authoritarian rule. Has the news let us down?"

Bio:

Dave Adsett is a second-generation newspaper publisher from Fergus, Ontario.
The Wellington Advertiser serves the county of Wellington and neighbouring environs, printing in excess of 40,000 copies per week. The North Wellington Community News is a second title, adding hyperlocal advertising and news options for residents. The firm has had an online presence since 1997.
In addition to publishing newspapers, the Fergus campus houses a full-scale print shop. From books to promotional materials, signage and vehicle wraps, the operation is designed to serve residents and local businesses.
Dave also has ownership interests in subscribed and controlled circulation newspaper titles west of Fergus to the beautiful shores of Lake Huron.
His passion for democracy was fed in part by numerous terms on local council as mayor and culminated in a term as warden of Wellington County in 2003, after which a term was spent as chair of the Wellington County Police Services Board.
That desire to serve translated to the Ontario Community Newspaper Association, where he has been a director since 2012, and is currently serving as President.
His time on the national board, since its inception, has confirmed his belief that successful news organizations are critical to a democratic and united Canada.
In August 2023, Dave was appointed chair of Newsmedia Canada which represents the interests of daily and community newspapers across the country, as well as on-line publications. During the past few months he has been a member of the negotiating committee that landed the $100

million Google investment in Canadian news.
On a personal level, Dave and his family live on the 7th line of old Eramosa township where his ancestors first settled in 1892. The farm is his reprieve from a busy work life.

Dave owns The Wellington Advertiser and the North Wellington Community News, as well as a print shop and publishing house. The Wellington Advertiser has a distribution of 41,000 weekly.

There are 2 categories of journalists – reporters (10,000 across Canada) and influencers – usually via social media, (82,000 across Canada)

There is a lot of 'infotainment' and fake news.

Democracy is under fire

Approximately 10% of the world's countries have functioning democracies, and there are 37%

Who are 'nominal' democracies.

About 80% of countries have authoritarian rule – ignorance of events favours this type of rule – (example – current events in Iran and shutting down of all communications)

About 83% of all news outlets are free – when news is free the consumer is the product. Their data is sold to advertisers.

Digital surveillance is also prevalent.

More people are living under authoritarian rule. Reporters need to do a better job at informing the public in a non-partisan and evidence-based manner.

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