

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, Virtual Meeting

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NOVEMBER IS ROTARY FOUNDATION MONTH

Happy Birthday

Nov 17: Wendy Whitter
Nov 22: Laurie Anderson

Happy Anniversary

UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

Nov 16: Andrew Rocha
Fraser Valley Bandits – Prof. Basketball

Nov 23: Shashanka Vangari
Who's Who

Nov 30: Speaker TBA
Foundation Month Presentation

OUR CLUB LAST WEEK'S MEETING:

President **Patrick Dobbyn** presided.

Speaker: Kwok Yang (Jack) Ng - Operating a Restaurant During the COVID Pandemic

Jack is a member and Director-at-Large of the South Whidbey Island Rotary club which is situated in Freeland, Washington, on South Whidbey Island, where Jack lives.

Whidbey Island is in Puget Sound, about 30 miles (48 km) north of Seattle, and lies between the Olympic Peninsula and the I-5 corridor of western Washington.

It is home to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. The state parks and natural forests on the Island are home to numerous old growth trees.

According to the 2000 census, Whidbey Island was home to 67,000 residents with an estimated 29,000 of those living in rural locations.



About our speaker, Jack Ng: The following information was obtained from an interview with Jack in April, 2017, as found on the Web.

I didn't graduate from high school, so being an immigrant from China, all I knew was that I needed to work hard and make a living without an education. After high school, I started off fishing in the Bering Sea in Alaska for two years. During my time off, I worked in the kitchen of a Chinese restaurant with my brothers and sisters. Working in Alaska was extremely hard and dangerous, so I knew I needed to save money and to start my own business. I wanted a better life.

After two years, I had saved enough money. As my family was well experienced in the restaurant business, we partnered together to start our first China City restaurant in downtown Oak Harbor where it remains today. Over time the business grew, and we expanded into Langley before purchasing our own real estate and moving to our Freeland location. About two years ago, we were successful in opening a new China City off the island in the Mill Creek town center. While running China City, I also ventured into the import business but found that operating China City was my true calling.



I never thought I would become a politician, but I currently serve as Port Commissioner for the Port of South Whidbey Island. I am also on the board of the Economic Development Council of South Whidbey and founded the Rotary Wine Club.

During this time, I met my wife Angela in the little town of Langley, WA. We have a beautiful, smart, son Jacob who is now 12 years old. The little smart ass loves basketball and sports, currently playing for South Whidbey middle school where he attends. He also has a great sense of humour.



What were the major life lessons and wisdom that I gained during my journey over the last 20 years? Do what you're good at, and learn from your experiences to become better at what you do. I've also learned to respect elders and others in general, to be generous and forgiving, to be a part of the community, and that you should never be afraid to ask for advice. Never give up.

Jack's presentation

Jack owns three restaurants on Whidbey Island, and they are just opening up another one. The first Covid case in America was detected in Snohomish, just across the water from Whidbey Island on the mainland (just east of Everett). In March 2021 the first shutdown of businesses as a result of Covid took place. Prior to the shutdown, at each of their restaurant locations they served between 180 and 200 seated customers each day, in addition to take-out. Approximately 75% to 80% of their business came from the bar and sit-down patrons, with about 25% coming from the take-out business. Due to the shutdown, they had to layoff 30% to 40% of their workforce, although they kept their kitchen staff as the take-out orders increased substantially.

DoorDash and other food pickup businesses were first charging the restaurants about 30% of the cost of the meal, but the restaurant were given some relief when the government legislated that only 15% could be charged, and that restaurants would be allowed to sell liquor with the take-out service. In addition, the government provided relief under the Paycheck Protection Program, which granted government guaranteed loans to businesses which would be forgiven upon proof that Covid resulted in substantial business losses. For example, if a business had \$1 million of sales in 2019 but in 2021 had only \$500,000, the business would get to keep the difference. Employees also got significant grants to compensate loss of employment and to stimulate the economy.

Nevertheless, a lot of persons who lost their jobs were suffering hardships. He and other businesses provided help to the community. His business provided free take-out food to about 200 people. They also obtained from their connections in China 50,000 face masks for four Rotary Clubs on Whidbey, and gave about 30,000 masks, as well as gloves, goggles and other personal protection equipment, to the local hospital, when they were hard to come by.

Currently their business has recovered substantially to the extent that they are now open about 50% of the time. Their current problem is that they can't find enough employees to work as bartenders, servers, bussers, etc. A lot of businesses, including healthcare, technology companies, etc., have a shortage of workers. Some of this was probably the result of the money that these former workers were getting from the government as a result of Covid - some of them are perhaps waiting to get better

jobs or just wish a break from the service industry. Their own business has advertised for the last 1½ years and has only been able to hire about four employees.

Question: Has there been much discrimination against Chinese people in your area since Covid?

Jack stated that they have not seen a lot of discrimination on Whidbey Island because it's a smaller community where everybody knows each other. However, in places like San Francisco or New York there have been a significant increase in discrimination, with attacks on Chinese people including seniors who have been assaulted and knocked down. There have been a couple of situations in his restaurant where a group of people were making racist comments among themselves, which upset patrons at nearby tables; and he had to ask them to desist or to leave.

There was one person who refused to wear a facemask and gave as her reason that she didn't want to wear anything that was made in China; to which Jack pointed out that she was eating in a Chinese restaurant, cooked and served by Chinese people, and had with her a cell phone that was probably made in China. On another recent occasion while waiting in a ferry lineup, a man came up to him and said that he was driving "Hitler's car" (it must've been a German model) and that he should go back to China. Jack felt an obligation to challenge this person's comments which are particularly upsetting and of concern to the senior Chinese Americans who cannot defend themselves. Jack also noted that in Seattle at the beginning of the pandemic many Chinese businesses had to board up their windows because of racial attacks.

Happy and Sad Dollars

Matt said that the Covid vaccination cards were going very well and that they have now prepared cards for 350 people.

Mark Vosper, a soccer fan, said that he was "happy to see that the Vancouver Whitecaps punctuated the roller coaster regular-season with the breathtaking finish on Sunday, battling the Seattle Sounders to a one-to-one draw and clinching a playoff spot in the process" (or perhaps less dramatic words to that effect).

Eric was happy that Urma's mother had a successful hip replacement, and extra happy because the replacement cost was \$0.00 ("I love Canada!")

Sharon and Ron have bought a new truck to pull their trailer (and which they can use to give Chili some more backup lessons - to which Chili replied that he would match Sharon's donation).

Ineke had some happy news or some sad news (she hasn't figured out which it is yet) - she is now the president of the Hometown Heroes Society.

Fine Master: **Brenda** fined those who had not purchased or worn a poppy. She also educated us about the fact that it was just over 100 years ago that the wearing of the poppy became a tradition in Canada as a Remembrance Days symbol.



It was in **July 1921** that the Great War Veterans' Association, a Canadian veterans group, and the precursor to the Royal Canadian Legion, took up the poppy as a Remembrance Day symbol, a tradition that the Legion has carried on in the century since. The significance of the Poppy can be traced back to the Napoleonic wars in the 19th century. Records from that time indicate how thick poppies grew over the graves of the soldiers in the area of Flanders, France. Fields that had been barren before the battle exploded with the blood red flowers after the fighting ended because during the tremendous bombardments of the war the chalk soils became rich in lime from rubble allowing the poppies to thrive. When the war ended, the lime was absorbed into the soil and the Poppy began to disappear again. The person who introduced the Poppy to Canada was John McCrae, a Canadian Medical Officer during the first world war who penned the poem "in Flanders Fields" on a scrap of paper in May 1915 on the day following the death of a fellow soldier.



Announcements:

Ineke - asked the members of the International Committee to come early next Tuesday prior to our regular Rotary luncheon, for a meeting at about 11 am.

Ineke - watch for an email about Christmas plants for sale to raise money for Rotary.

Adrienne - Mark your calendar for December 4 for the Christmas party, which will probably be held at Clint's house.

Ineke - volunteers are needed to help raise money for the Backpack Food Program, to sell hotdogs on November 20, 2021 with shifts from 11 AM to 1 PM and 1 PM to 3 PM. If you can help, call Ineke.

Presidents Quote:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson