

More Ways of Making the World a Better Place for Everyone

Totem Report December 6, 2017

By Bret Anderson

Many Thanks to **Past President Cathy** for standing in for a suffering **President Mark** today.

Our handsome and debonair Sergeant at Arms, **Ken Grant** (isn't he due for a promotion to lieutenant yet?) with his usual talented efficiency managed to get the program ready. He even accompanied the lovely **Linda Rough** in the singing of the Bob Hope classic, *Silver Bells* in B flat.

The invocation by **Bill Center** focused on humility and self-realization. "God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, which is pretty much everyone, since I'm clearly not you, God... Please give me the courage to change what I need to change about myself which is frankly a lot...give me the wisdom to just shut up whenever I think I'm clearly smarter than everyone else in the room..."

We welcomed visiting Rotarian Christine Berthold, from Germany.

John Steckler, representing The Rotary Foundation (TRF), gave us a lot of interesting numbers. To date, only 39% of the membership have contributed to the fund. He reminded us that there are 11,000 homeless people in King County. 5,485 sleep on the street every night. Last year, 69 homeless people died. The homeless population of the US is 500,000. Seattle is the 18th largest city in the U.S. but 3rd in the number of homeless. There is no silver bullet to solve this problem.

One program that helps is building Tiny Houses. Each 120 sq ft home sleeps four people, and costs \$2,400 to build. A village of tiny homes cost \$25,000. Seattle 4 put in \$2,000 of this amount, joining with other Rotary clubs and matching funds from TRF to raise the full cost. This means 40 people will get off the street, and the project may even save a life.



Jennifer Porto reported that the Seattle Rotary Service Foundation (SRSF) campaign has been supported by 38% of members so far this year. She told the story of little Madu, who was born deaf in Mongolia. Rotary had paid for a doctor to test the baby's hearing as a newborn. Since the brain depends upon stimulus from the outside, being born deaf can cause serious developmental problems. Due to the testing program, Madu received a cochlear implant to help her brain develop normally. This was made possible through SRSF's support of the Save the Silent World program.



For our main program, Teri Citterman, executive coach and speaker was our moderator and asked important questions of entrepreneur and investor Jonathan Sposato. Many thanks to Jonathan for providing a copy of his new book, “Better Together,” to each attendee.

Sposato, a Whitman College grad, has announced that he will only fund startups with at least one female founder. University of Washington has given him the Man of Integrity Award.

Jon reminded us that questions of gender and gender equality represent a major unsolved issue for our time. How long, he asks, will it be until there is a no-fear environment for women in the workplace so that our society can receive the full advantage of what they have to offer?

White women earn 79 cents for every dollar earned by a white male, while black women earn 62 cents and Asian and Hispanic women earn just 55 cents. Of the Fortune 500 companies, only 24 have women CEOs. 14 billion dollars are lost every year when women leave their jobs due to sexual harassment or because they feel undervalued.

Why write the book? Jon asks, and he tells us about a woman who arrived in New York City with \$200 in her pocket. His mother left Hong Kong because she felt that things were not fair for women there, but arrived in America to find that things were not much better here. As an angel investor, Jon gets to sit in on several boards and see lots of new ideas seeking funding. He has heard over and over how hard it is for women to receive proper attention. The book was co-authored by Grace Kahng, who wrote chapter seven, which deals with the concern of having the support of other women in organizations.

This issue of gender equality is so fraught with concerns that many men feel they don’t have permission to talk about it. Sposato feels that he needs permission from women to address the issue. He just asks that men be invited into these conversations.

What was Jon’s biggest insight while doing research for his book? A Boston firm followed 80 women CEOs. Comparing costs and returns, the firms with women CEOs made a 226% return on equity. They ranked above male led firms in every area measured. Another study compared companies with just men on their boards to companies who had at least three women on their boards. The boards with women were 46% ahead.



There is a lot of inertia in acknowledgment of the problem. For the tech industry, it is not a pipeline problem. With more women than men graduating from colleges and increasingly more women with STEM degrees, companies just need to look harder.

How can men help? We often unconsciously think that a good leader has masculine attributes. We must pledge to advance the careers of women.

There are different generations of feminist. The meaning has evolved over time. Men can be feminists, too. Title Nine opened all education opportunities to women, but the Equal Rights Amendment is still not ratified. We still have a long way to go.

Jon volunteered to help with a site or other support for the Rotary Tiny Houses project.



Lacey Clark reminded us about the Holiday Gift Drive.

Cathy thanked Mark and the members for their support of her as District Governor. Newly elected board and officers were announced and their names will appear in the Totem email.