

Hanky Program

Marcy Wilson is Executive Director of the Hendrick Scholarship Foundation. As such, it is her prime directive to vacuum up ever loose shekel wherever she can find it. So once a year, she contemplates how best to do that at Rotary and concludes, "Make 'em weep." And with that, she gathers up her hardest hard-luck tales told by the youngsters who have lived them and yet have at last benefitted from the Foundation's (and our) largesse. Today was no different, except that *Photographe du Jour* was **Alan Feigenbaum**, and he introduced Marcy.



Prince John belled us to order at 12:18 as Sainted Editor scrambled for pen and paper to record the proceedings. (He and wife Pat were to leave for Wisconsin directly after the meeting, and, in the chaos that

attends trip preparation, he had forgotten his trusty PDA.) John called upon Reverend Mueller for the Prayer and **Emilia Ahmed** for the Pledge. ("Hi, Bob.") He thanked **Earnest Burke** for greeting; of course, Earnest has an unhidden agenda in wanting to shake (down) all our hands.



SERGEANT DU JOUR CAPTAIN KIRK likened his warm reception <single clap> to that Congress gave **Roger Clements**. He declared it "Bring Your Wife to Rotary Day" after we had welcomed



five spouses including the long-suffering **Jan Sullivan**. She declared that **Ean's** introduction of her was even acceptable today; he concluded that she was the newest grandmother (HINT, Ean: wives are a bit touchy about that classification.) at Rotary today, **Abigail**

Marie having been born Sunday afternoon! **Gary Basham** challenged the assertion with a grandson *Born Yesterday!* But Ean held his ground by noting the absence of the relevant **grandma** at Rotary today.



John awarded a Perfect Attendance pin for 7 years to **Michael Baldwin**.

He recognized **Sarah "You Can't Be That Old" Watkins** and Emilia Ahmed for their birthday checks. (Apparently, Emilia can.)

We were reminded yet again of the Happy Hour in less than 5 hours at the Twenty 7 Sports Grill and Bar in Plano.

Scary Bob was called away from the microphone to announce the September Program Schedule.

Predictably, it relies heavily on the military, quasi-military, and law enforcement arenas familiar to *Bob*. We'll have programs from Collin County Sheriff's Office (9/2), the Civil Air Patrol (9/9), and a military historian (9/30). As a break, we get to listen to the Democratic Candidate for Governor on 9/23. Sharp eyes will have noted an absence of 9/16, but this is explained by the *Hendrick Scholarship Golf Tournament Dinner* on 9/14 being the **substitute** meeting for that week. Indeed, *Bob* noted that 75% of the Tournament's take occurs that evening at the dinner, so we are all urged to attend and bid up auction items!



Alan Feigenbaum introduced Marcy Wilson. Before signing on as the Hendrick Executive Director, Marcy worked for the Department of Defense, a start-up business, and several nonprofit agencies, but her critical background for the job was the 15 years she

spent in colleges and universities. (They were the best 4 years of her life!) She is a living example to Hendrick students of where learning to learn can take you.

Marcy told us the 90% of "our" students are retained to graduation. But they are the very definition of "*at risk students*," poor, and from broken families. The Scholarship Program had to drop three of them for failure to maintain a proper grade point average, a result of working too many hours to support families. One was working on a pre-med curriculum and may return. As of Spring 2011, Hendrick will be supporting 14 in Collin College and 6 more in universities. And they could not do that without the financial backing of the Golf Tournament.

It is not only financial but also counseling support the Foundation offers. Thus they are

in a position to watch the evolution of these students. Marcy described how one began the interviews "*shaking like a leaf*." He broke down when questioned about his family life, but he's now doing computer work for the Department of Homeland Security.

Still it breaks their hearts to be able to accept only one in five who apply. They look for those who have persevered through adversity and bet on their continuing success. And their stories make the Foundation more attractive to others, "*a victim of our own success*." Indeed, the finances are strained when students graduate from the economical Collin College to the more expensive universities.



Marcy told us of the success of **Diana Gonzales** who visited us last year. She is now teaching in Irving ISD.

With that, Marcy called her first witness, **Kivin Tahir**, who began her talk thanking us for our support of the Program. Her story involved being the middle sister in a family of seven. (If she'd been on **STAR TREK**, she'd have been "4 of 7.") The Plano Housing Authority was responsible for allowing the family to move to Plano. Her Father works at **Walmart**, and her Mother's a housewife (and a professional baby-minder). Her older brother and sister work to support the family and have been unable to take advantage of after-school opportunities in sports or music. They have worked to "*shelter me from it all*."



She was encouraged to apply for the Hendrick by a high school counselor. When she learned she'd won, it felt "*like a million dollars!*" She's working toward her AA and has applied to TWU's Dental Hygiene program. She's hoping to attend Baylor Dental School and become a dentist.

The next student to take the podium was **Leo Soto** who told us that he was the most nervous about speaking while trying to tie his tie. He

noted that he had succeeded in that, but it didn't prepare him for the agony of having to divulge his tale of the perfect dysfunctional family. He was, at times, speechless, as he tried to explain his background. Indeed, at one



point, **Johnny Lewis** rose to put a comforting arm around him as he struggled.

His family moved from Mexico to the US where his Mom worked day and evening shifts to try to make ends meet. His Dad would show up to impregnate his Mom and then would disappear again, but not before beating her for good measure. Leo became *de facto* Dad to his two younger brothers. But there was no one for him. As a final indignity, his Dad killed his Mom.

Leo has turned to God as the Father he was denied. He hopes to enter the Ministry and also to learn architecture. He thanked us for our support of his efforts.

Bethany Aziz had a hard act to follow. Like Leo, hers was an abusive family situation. Her Dad failed to kill her Mom on his first attempt. So he stalked the family as they tried to move away from him, and, on Mother's Day, he locked himself in a car with her Mom and set fire to it, burning both of them to death. Bethany was five years old at the time, but she still remembers watching the tragedy unfold.

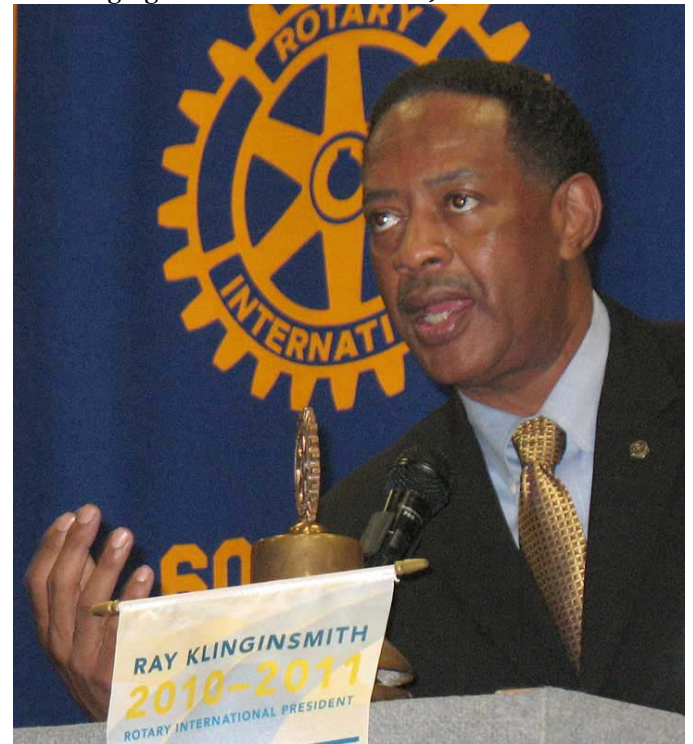
She and her three siblings went to live with a kindly grandmother who died of cancer, leaving the little family wondering what they had done to endure compounding tragedy.



Various aunts and uncles suggested putting the blame on the children for the various deaths. Such a "revelation" was devastating.

One brother, recently out of prison, took over their care, but he could find no suitable job. So Bethany became "Mom" to her little sister. And she *"looked forward to becoming 30 when it would all be over."*

When she won the Hendrick Scholarship, she thought it a mistake not to have given it to *"someone more deserving."* But, four years later, she's still in college, living her dream of education. She had nothing but praise for Marcy and the rest of the staff at the Foundation. And she gratuitously compared them favorably to her thoughtless teachers *"who never really cared."* (That must have been encouraging to our PISD members!)



Earnest Burke noted that even though we had formally run over our hour (it was 1:07), he wanted us to know that he was deeply touched

by these testimonials. He said that he is “*more strongly committed to the Hendrick Scholarship Foundation that anything else in my life.*”



Camille Ussery, noting that her Viewpoint Bank supports the Hendrick Scholarship Foundation, presented Marcy with a check for \$3,000 to sponsor a student's education.

Prince John presented Marcy with a book destined for *Memorial Elementary* to be signed by our testimonial speakers. Then he asked if anyone had other announcements, concluding, “*You’d better not.*” He led us in the Four-Way Test and thrice belled us out at 1:11.

