

**ROTARY CLUB of HEALDSBURG SUNRISE  
TAYMAN PARK  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**DATE:           Wednesday, 13 July 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:   30/44           68%**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Colleen Carmichael led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**ROTARY MOMENT/INSPIRATION:**

Ann Marie Montecucollo, in support of Carla Howell, who recently lost her husband, Kent Mitchell offered the following from Desiderata:

*Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.  
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.  
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.*

*Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.  
You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars;  
you have a right to be here.*

*And whether or not it is clear to you,  
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.*

**SINGING:**

Signaling a resounding recovery from last week, the group sang a clearly recognizable version of *California, Here I Come*.

**GUESTS:**

1.     Nita Parker, Noon Club representative
2.     Lisa Palmieri Cloverdale Club, visiting, potential transfer
3.     John Namkung, special education director, program speaker

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1.     Chairperson Pam Everson reports that the **International Services Committee** will meet following this morning's meeting.
2.     Jake McKee is asking all members to help locate our **Wonder League Banners**, which went missing after our next to the last game.
3.     Will Seppi announced that there is going to be a meeting of **the Duck Dash Committee** (still seeking new members) in the near future to begin planning for next year's event, hoping to capitalize on what was learned from this year's event.
4.     Dan Erickson reminded members of the Club outing to the San Francisco **Giants/Arizona Diamondbacks Baseball game on Wednesday, 31 August 2016.**

This will be a trip by bus and Golden gate ferry to AT&T Park. There will be no regular Club meeting that day.

5. **District Gov. Wulff Reinhold will be visiting the Club on Tuesday, 2 August**, for review of our Club administration and committee structure and plans. More details regarding this visit will be sent by email from Dan Erickson to all members of the Club. Committee chairpersons are encouraged to prepare written reports for presentation at this meeting.

6. The Noon Club will be holding their **annual golf tournament on 6 August 2016**. **Lee Morton** is hoping to arrange for some to participate in this event.

7. **Jack Vallerga** would like the board to consider two proposals: 1- to incorporate the name of Shaun McCaffery into the Duck Dash program and 2- to add the name of George Lawson to our Wonder League promotions.

8. Pam Moulton reported an update on our out going student, Talia Morales, who will be heading soon to Sweden. She asked members to donate to a special fund to help meet some of her travel expenses. A basket was passed and money collected.

#### **HAPPY DOLLARS:**

**Larry Orr** contributed \$1 as a sign of happiness with the return of a full-sized American flag.

**Shaun Shields** is happy that his niece has been promoted to sergeant, and that his son has been named the director of Internet department services at Visa Corporation.

**John Holt** made a donation in memory of Kent Mitchell, expressing sadness with his loss and happiness for all of the service that he provided to the Club and to the community.

#### **RECOGNITIONS:**

**Larry Orr** celebrated a birthday and made a gracious donation to the Club Foundation.

**Fred Walter** helped his wife to celebrate another birthday. He made an additional donation to the Club Foundation

**Brandy Seppi**, wife of "**hands-on member**" **Will Seppi**, was featured at the bellringing at the closing of the stock market in New York City last week. Donations were made to the Club Foundation and the general fund.

**Bonnie Headley** has returned from a trip to Southeast Asia, spending two weeks in Thailand. A donation was made to the Club Foundation.

**Will Seppi** presented president bread with gifts from the Knickerbocker Hotel and New York City where he and Brandy were guests last week. I am sure that the shampoo, book of matches, and other sundries will be well utilized.

**Therese Walker** has expressed a thank you for allowing her and her Live Oak Preschool staff to do face painting at our Fourth of July celebration. She is eager to continue this practice next year.

#### **RAFFLE:**

Archie Julian held the winning ticket but was unable to name the event in the Olympics that a Healdsburg resident held the record for in the 1920s. Answer – Ralph Rose, shotput, 51 feet, record lasted from 1909-1928.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

**George Lawson** made a presentation to the Club on a new program, being shared collaboratively with the Noon Club, Cloverdale Rotary and Windsor Rotary. This program is called **Rotary Cares**, and is designed to have an area-wide presence for fostering programs for special needs children as well as increasing community awareness of this segment of the population. The concept grew out of the success of our Wonder League program which incorporates participants from all of these communities, as well as Santa Rosa and Calistoga. There will be a board made up of members from each of the Clubs. Each Club will contribute funds for the startup of this program and the governing board will seek further sponsorships and donations to help support the programs and other activities. Members from our Club who are involved in this program include Jake McKee, Colleen Carmichael, George Lawson and Pam Moulton.

### **PROGRAM:**

John Nankung, special education teacher and administrator presented the program of his involvement with Syrian refugees in Greece. The formal title of his program was *Safe Passages For Refugees-How My Experiences With Refugees In Greece Opened My Eyes And My Heart.*

John spoke of several journeys that he has taken in the past year. The first journey, leading to his involvement with the refugees in Greece, came about as a result of personal turmoil and subsequent involvement in a mindfulness meditation program. From there he developed skills in Metta Meditation, also known as Love and Kindness Meditation which led to a deep sense of compassion for the millions of suffering people in the world. It is out of this awareness and his belief that he could do something to relieve that suffering that he began the second and third journeys.

The second journey was actually traveling to Greece. When he left the states in early 2016 he knew that he was growing to Greece, but did not know for whom he would be working or what he would be doing. In the airport on his way to Greece, read a quotation inside a bottle top from Helen Keller that ended this way... "the world moves by the tiny pushes of each honest worker."

His third journey was the actual personal experiences and growth that he experienced as the result of his travels in Greece and with working with individuals in a refugee camp of 12,000 people near the border with Macedonia.

He gave a brief summary of the magnitude of the problem. Over 3 million people have left Syria because of the war and have migrated to other areas, mainly Greece. An additional 6 million people are displaced within Syria, being too poor to afford the smuggler fees to get them out of the country. This is the equivalent of displacing 135 million Americans because of war. Many of the refugees are now stranded in camps as borders have been closed throughout the European countries, making further migration extremely difficult and risky.

Initially John was involved with practical matters within camp life. He helped with food preparation and delivery for the thousands of people that needed food assistance on a daily basis. Hours were long, the weather was unremittingly hot, and there was a great deal of travel back and forth from food preparation sites to actual delivery sites. During this period of time he got a overview of camp life. Most of the people in the camp are trying to lead normal lives, to keep their clothing clean, they attend to barbering and other personal care issues, the children play regularly and seem to enjoy life. Social contact is maintained, and there is very little strife or conflict within the camps.

The second part of his journey in the camp involved becoming more closely attached to individuals. He recited an incident where there was contact made about cell phone usage and obtaining a battery charger for a refugee's phone. Cell phones are essential for contact family that may or may not be in the camps but to have cell phones as well was within the camp itself. The second connection was when he helped another camper with the repair project and was invited into his home to sit in his lounge chair that had been obtained somehow within the camp. It was interesting that after John returned to this country, he saw photographs from other people who had been to the camp and immediately recognized chair in which he had sat.

The third and most telling connection he had was with a man with two small children and a beautiful wife. The infant stroller had developed a flat tire that needed repair and the father had spent money to purchase a pair of sandals for his son that were the wrong size. John spent the entire day before his departure from Greece helping this man to get his tire fixed and replaced as well as finding a proper-fitting pair of sandals for his son. The stroller tire repair was particularly telling in that when he went to pay for the repair at tire shop he was told by the proprietor that there was no charge "I do not do this for you. I do not do this for me. I do it for goodness." It is this humanitarian commitment of the people of Greece, the people in the camp, and the workers from around the world who are helping make life more bearable and tolerable for this enormous population of displaced people.

He closed his presentation reminding us that there is another world that we are not aware of in which people are struggling merely to survive on a daily basis. These are people just like us, middle-class citizens of countries that are being ravaged by war.

A second observation let third observation is that regardless is that the images that we see of Middle East people in the media are misleading. They show mainly angry men. Rarely do we see humaneness of Syrian men and the joy of life of all people in the refugee camps.

Also observed that regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, culture, etc. all people are the same at the core, wanting to love and to be loved, seeking safety and security, harboring hopes and dreams, and desiring to lead productive lives.

The fourth, and most important understanding that he came home with is that small acts of kindness are the most important personal interactions in this situation, and in all situations.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Lisa Witke Schaffner

John Jordan Foundation

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Pile, Club Secretary