

**Rotary Club of Honolulu**  
**Royal Hawaiian Hotel Regency Roo9m**  
**May 7, 2019**  
**Presiding: President Bub Wo**

Today's meeting began with an energy that was almost deafening. Could it be due to not being together for 2 weeks?

Inspiration was given by **Jessica Lani Rich**, President and CEO of VASH. Jessica shared the good works of VASH and how the Sidney and Minnie Kosasa Foundation would donate money to VASH and save the day many times over.

Pledge of Allegiance by **Tom Coyne**. The singing of God Bless America was led by **Al Linton**. Visitor Introductions were given by **Dawn Marie**. We had visitors from Rotary Club of Nagoya Meleki, Japan, Nozomu Taguchi, Rotary Club of Ermelo of the Netherlands, Patty Van Vierzen, Rotary Club of Mumbai Seaface, India, Kalpana. Other guests were Donalyn Dela Cruz, guest of **Mitch Dolier** (Donalyn will be introduced as a member next week), Lynne Madden, guest of **Tom Matthews**, Nancy Lewis guest and wife of **Mike Herb**, who shared a story about their visit to the Rotary Club of Paris Academies. The meeting was held on April 15, 2019 in a very old café built in 1686. The club has had many celebrity guests and the cost to attend was around \$40 including wine. Later that day as they were getting ready for dinner they looked out of their window and saw the Notre Dame on fire. (A historic moment for sure.) **Reed Myer's** guest was Keoki Ching, **Sid Snyder's** guest was Lorraine Minatoishi, **Jessica Lani Rich** had 3 guests, Kenlyn Lum Yee, Lisa Fallau, and Joan Fujishiro. Birthdays this week: **Jerry Rauckhorst, Joanna Amberger, Rick Tabor** and **Joanne Arizumi**. Club Anniversaries are: **Terry Walsh** 2 years, **Hiroko Dewitz** 14 years, **Sarah Nordwall** 25 years, **Wayne Judd** 26 years, and **Craig Robinson** 36 years (that generated applause).

Additional announcements: **Alice Tucker** introduced the Hawaii Rotary Youth Foundation Scholarship Winner, Shirley Li. Shirley and her mother were in attendance where we all congratulated Shirley for winning our contest but also winning the Area Scholarship. Shirley will be attending MIT this year studying health and mental health and find ways to help those who are afflicted. **Rob Hale** gave the monthly update on the Rotary Park. Approval for the Rotary Park will be going to City Council for a vote this Wednesday May 8, 2019. Think positive thoughts. The AIS environmental study started and a cement slab was found and deemed historical. Hal Hammett is in charge and working on the study and investigation. Anyone interested in joining the Park Committee there will be a meeting next week Friday at the Pacific Club downstairs at the Pool area. **Linda Coble** and **Lyla Berg** gave an update on Pearl Haven where Rotarians painted, and helped to renovate this old facility. I think most of know it as the Crawford building in Haleiwa. The statistics are really unbelievable, average age of the sex trafficked children is 13 yrs of age and 1 in 11 men are involved in Hawaii. **Carolann Bierderman** is reminding all of us to return our pledge forms for the Service Above Self Campaign.

Our speaker Paul Kosasa shared the history of his family and how ABC stores got started. First **President Bub** shared a Chinese Proverb: Drink the water and remember the source. Paul's parents, father Sidney and mother Minnie Kosasa were both sent to internment camps in California and did not give up on what America provides, the American dream. They started the ABC stores in 1949 in Kaimuki. Father Sidney was a pharmacist and opened a drug store and a health and beauty aids store in Kaimuki. They belonged to a buying cooperative in New York City and was on a trip there and visited Florida. They looked around and saw the tourists and realized that Waikiki could become full of tourists one day. A grocery store owner next door was leaving his business offered the Kosasas his store to purchase so they purchased the grocery store and this is how they started the grocery store. Then another souvenir store owner down the street did the same. So now they owned a grocery store, souvenir store and a drug store and health and beauty aid store. All the children worked in the stores. Paul admitted he had a tendency to feel entitled with a know-it-all attitude. The other workers helped him learn humility and a leadership style which is "Set the example." He cleaned bathrooms, pulled weeds and expressed gratitude a lot. ABC Stores has a flat organization and under Paul's leadership, he always asks the employees "tell me who your customer is." They are tourists and local people. Tourists are happy people because they are on vacation so the employees are encouraged to "talk story" get to know your customers. ABC Stores are also very engaged with the community such as the Honolulu Symphony, Punahou School, 'Iolani School, the Nuuanu YMCA and Kaimuki YMCA on which they owned the land and donated it to the YMCA. Paul shared there are 35 ABC Stores in Waikiki and a total of 76 stores located all over the world. They started their first restaurant Basalt Restaurant in Waikiki. They interview their cashiers regularly as their front line people are the closest to the tourists and this is how they enhance their brand by staying close to their customer's needs. While ABC Stores are ubiquitous they are truly part of the community providing a much needed service to Hawaii's economy, a true American dream. Thank you Paul and family for your contributions to Hawaii and for sharing your family's wonderful story.

Respectfully submitted,

**Signe Godfrey**