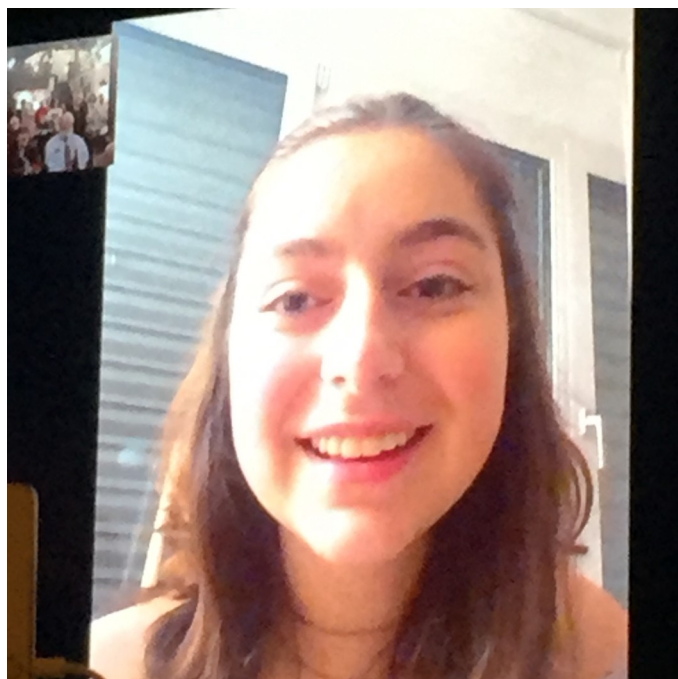




Nestled amongst the seasonal green and white hills of the Naples Valley, Hollerhorn Distillery was the location of our Annual Rotary Christmas Party this year. Our hosts, Karl and Melissa Neubauer, “treated” us to an evening of elegant surroundings, and fine cuisine! Each table was adorned with a cheery holiday centerpiece, compliments of our creative Sherry, and a tray filled with luscious cheeses, crackers, and figs, done by Melissa. Upon entering the main dining area, one couldn’t help but feel festive, seeing the soft lighting, and beautiful boughs of pine that graced the room. This was to be a memorable evening!

One of the highlights of the evening was being able to have a “live chat” with our exchange student, Phoebe, daughter of Karl and Melissa, and granddaughter of Arden, who is spending the year in Austria, homeland of her grandfather, Josef.



Though it was around midnight in Phoebe’s “neck of the woods” she was happy to visit with us, and she seems to be enjoying her experience abroad! She shared a cute anecdote with us about spending the night with friends. We then serenaded her with a couple of Christmas favorites, “We Wish You A Merry Christmas” and “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town”. Speaking of being serenaded, we were also treated to some lovely songs of the season by Phil Bariteau, and some of his very talented students, who played the flute!



Looking out over the collection of Rotarians and guests, President Jack considered us a “wonderful group”, and indeed, we were, as merriment and conviviality filled the room! We sang warm congratulations to Jerry for his December birthday (that’s him at the lower left above), and to Karen and Clayton, and Gloria and Larry for their December anniversaries. We thanked Sherry for the cute centerpieces and treats, and we applauded Karl and Melissa for their warm hospitality. We also conveyed our appreciation to Skip and Judy for all their efforts in planning this gala event.



President Jack had each of the tables introduce its guests. Along with the thirty-two members in attendance, there were plenty of visitors whom we welcomed this evening! They included Dave and Marilyn, Sharon, Terry, Clayton, Kit, Alvaro, Jim, Arden, Frazey, Frank, Angie and Tom, Larry and Jean, Mindy, and Kathleen. If I forgot to mention anyone, I sincerely apologize! I forgot to bring my attendance sheet, and I had to write down everyone's name!

After having feasted on a sumptuous buffet, it was time for us to open our gifts, and there was a plethora of beautifully-wrapped, enticing items on the stage, awaiting our inspection!



Our Gift Exchange Hosts, Carrie and Bill, took charge of the proceedings, calling out each one's (drawn) number in succession. We marveled in unison, as each participant opened his or her treasure, and there was an elegant variety of items for sure! Lots of jocular humor ensued, however, when John French opened his gift! It was a stuffed black squirrel, no less, and I think it's deemed to stay at Hollerhorn!!

(We understand that the squirrel came from Steve Richard's trophy collection. Uncanny that John "sniffed out" this masterpiece!)



Two tables of delectable desserts, prepared by Melissa, awaited us, as we rounded out the evening on a "sweet note"! Our thanks to all who helped to make Our Christmas Party 2018 a memorable one!!