



The Appleknocker

Sebastopol Rotary Club's Weekly Bulletin

Guy Smith – Fighting the Dixie Fire



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

Date: February 25, 2022
Volume: 2021/22—Issue E20-31
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"All the News that Fits We Print"



BEFORE THE BELL



What a joy it was to hear all the excited conversation in Memorial Hall before our meeting officially began. Zoom is great and certainly held us together during the months of isolation, but it can never replace the many connections and the sharing of a face-to-face meeting. Rotary needs it; we need it. As Johnny Cash so eloquently reminded us, "Flesh and blood needs flesh and blood."



AT THE BELL



At 12:15, **President Ellen**, suggesting that The Rotary Club of Sebastopol is the "happiest place on earth," – was Mickey Mouse really a Rotarian? - was able to break through the many conversations and call our meeting to order.

Jack Blasco led the pledge and **Guenter Meiburg** shared this thought for the day: "*Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results*" [Guenter referenced this quote to everyone involved in the great Crab Feed. - Ed]

Steve Beck led the singing of "America the Beautiful." So what if we sang it in 35 different keys. Don't confuse the issue, just sing!



Future Programs

March 4 , 2022

John Muhlner, Kathleen Patterson, Dan Balfe – Global Water Projects

March 11 , 2022

Bring Your Pet to Rotary!
Shirley Zindler, Sonoma County Pet Rescues and Adoptions

March 18 , 2022

Richard Ogg – Perspective on the local fishing climate from a well-known Bodega Bay Fisherman.

Coming Events

May 7, 2022

Out of Africa Party and Celebration.

Outdoors at Balletto Event Center

Miscellany

MAKEUP NOTIFICATIONS:
scottbriggs50@yahoo.com

On-line Make-Ups:
www.RotaryEClubOne.org

Domestic Violence Hotline:
707-546-1234

VISITING ROTARIANS & GUESTS

No Visiting Rotarians today.

Guests of Rotarians:



Our speaker for the day, **Guy Smith**, introduced his wife, Michelle.

Frank Mayhew introduced his son, Timothy, visiting from Lawrence, KS



He also introduced **Kathie's** faithful caregiver, Jane Mugwe, originally from Kenya.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays:

Mark Fink – Feb. 23. He was with us at the meeting, but was strangely speechless. Happy Birthday, Mark!



Brendon Houston, Feb. 21, and **Mario Ramos**, Feb. 24, were not at the meeting.

Anniversaries:

Pierre Lagourgue and Rose Marie celebrated 51 years on Feb. 21st.

Tony Given and Gloria celebrated 50 years on Feb. 26th.

Unfortunately, neither was with us at the meeting, but congratulations. 50 and 51 years together...truly something to be celebrated!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Food Bank: The seemingly tireless, **Cindy Carter**, reported that only two Rotarians showed up for the most recent Thursday afternoon shift at the Redwood Empire Food Bank. Our club has been volunteering to work once a month for a number of years, but is this a project we are still interested in? A show of hands was somewhat inconclusive, but a Thursday workday for March will be announced.

Ceres: Ceres is moving their garden and needs help with the move. A Rotary day to help with the move has been scheduled for March 18th, from 9:30 – 11:30 A.M. The move has actually begun, so if the 18th does not work for you and you want to help, go to the Ceres web site and sign up for a day.

Community Grants: Checks have been mailed and some thank you letters have already been received. The accompanying slide lists the groups funded and the amount each received. Thanks to **Cindy** and her committee for their good work on behalf of all of us.

Organization	Project	Amount Approved
Ceres Community Project	Moving garden, new trees and plants	\$2,400.00
West Sonoma County High School District	Establish a "Closet" at Analy similar to Laguna's. Provide clothes and shoes for needy students	\$ 800.00
Shoes 4 Kidz	Identify children in need; get size & color and provide with a pair of new athletic shoes	\$5,000.00
Earle Baum Center for the Blind	Replace workplace lighting (fluorescent to LED) for employees and guests to benefit	\$1,500.00
Sebastopol Area Senior Center	Harvest Café; equipment upgrade (floor, plumbing, electrical, grease trap, swamp cooler)	\$5,000.00
START CO CO (DBA) Artstart	Art, mural program for West County (fka Analy) and Laguna High Schools	\$2,000.00
Food For Thought	Greenhouse; seedlings, plants for garden	\$5,000.00
Sebastopol Center for the Arts (SebARTS)	Kilns, pottery wheels for Ceramic Studio	\$2,000.00
Alliance Redwoods Conference Grounds (ARCG)	Fire mitigation work; clear acreage and build defensible space (rent equipment)	\$2,000.00
WSCHS West County Museum	Display cases-Pop-up mini-museums	\$2,348.35
TOTAL		\$32,048.35

Now where does the money that funds this good work come from? Well, since you asked...

🍎 MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS 🍎

OUT OF AFRICA – MAY 7 – 5:00 TO 9:00!!!! Balletto Winery Event Center

Event chair, **Keller McDonald**, shared the first details of this upcoming event. Most of what you need to know is right below on the slide. This is our big fundraiser for the year, and we can all pitch in by selling tickets for the event and for the Big 5 raffle – named for either the Big 5 animals of Africa or the number of prizes or **Keller's** shirt size. There will be great food, beverages, entertainment and both a silent and live auction. One need not be present to win.



Rotary Club of Sebastopol

OUT OF AFRICA PARTY and CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022 5-9 PM ... outdoors at Balletto Event Center

Dressy casual

Buffet stations

Desserts

Wine and beverages

Live entertainment

Heads or tails

Live & silent auctions

Raffle prize drawing

Event tickets \$100 (event ticket sales start March 25)

One additional item to be auctioned off is the ever-popular instant wine cellar. **Greg Jacobs**, celebrating his 20th year as a member of our club, is chairing this part of the fund-raiser (Instant Wine Cellar) and announced that we can start contributing to the cellar next week. Each Rotarian is asked to bring at least one bottle of “fine” wine, but more than one would be greatly appreciated. That wine you bought on sale for \$36 a case probably is not what we are looking for.



THE WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE



Hal Kwalwasser had the “winning” number. He spun the Rotary Wheel and....in all honesty, I’m not sure what happened next. Did he win? Did he lose? He sat back down, shrugged his shoulders and that was that. Let’s hope the Out of Africa raffle has a bit more clarity! At my age, your faithful scribe obviously is easily confused.



THE PROGRAM



“Fighting the Dixie Fire” - In September, 2021, our club member, **Guy Smith**, received a call in the middle of the night. He needed to bring his bulldozer to Susanville to aid in fighting the Dixie fire, which had been burning in that area since July and was approaching one million acres. He was to come, not tomorrow, not in a few hours, but now. So, he packed his protective gear, put his dozer on a big truck and took off as fast as he could go, eventually passing almost every truck on I-5 with the blessing of the CHP. Little did he – or wife, Michelle, - know that he would not return home until October.



Why **Guy**? He has a long history of working with large trucks, bulldozers and other large machinery. He even demonstrated for us how to sink a bulldozer into the mud of the Laguna, and get it out again. Don’t try this at home. He is a professional! He shared for us some of his history with large trucks, driving for **Walt Tischer** – long time Rotarian, the Soiland family, and working with his son in logging operations. As a young man, he also worked for the division of forestry

in fire protection. **Walt**, whom many of us knew, must have been a patient man as he watched Guy attempt to strip every gear on his Peterbilt.

When **Guy** arrived in Susanville after his late night drive, he and his bulldozer were put right to work cutting fire breaks. They cut large swaths through trees and brush. He said that it really is ironic that they were knocking down trees in order to save trees. (Rather like **Keller** hunting ducks to save ducks) They were also able to cut lines around historical buildings thus saving them from the flames. With so much smoke and dust, they were often doing this dangerous work in near zero visibility. They also were required at times to work at night, when all they could really see was the light of the other bulldozers working nearby. And falling trees and branches proved to be a hazard. **Guy** said that hardly anyone, including himself, escaped without a broken windshield, which was a real bummer because it spoiled the air conditioning and filtered cabin air.



Their work would have been impossible without GPS and mapping. Not only did it show them where they had to go, but it also indicated escape routes when flames came dangerously close. He shared a number of photos of fire that was seemingly down, only to roar to life with a change of wind or weather conditions. One photo showed a bulldozer in front of him that actually caught on fire. It became necessary for them to clear a large safety zone where they could park while fire burned around them. So many hazards and dangers in this work: spot fires suddenly breaking out and quickly spreading, volcanic rock that could tip a dozer over, smoke and poor visibility, the unpredictability of wind and weather.



But in the end, **Guy** and his courageous fellow operators, along with the seemingly tireless fire fighters, finally put this monster fire down. We owe them all a deep debt of gratitude. Thanks **Guy** for sharing with us and for all you do.

THE FINAL BELL

President Ellen thanked **Guy** for a fascinating program and before adjourning our meeting, **President Ellen** left us with this question to ponder: "Do twins ever realize that one of them was unplanned?" She rang the bell.

See you all next week! And keep watching for Out of Africa announcements.

🍅 FUTURE PROGRAMS 🍅

March 4, 2022 - St. Helena Rotary Global Grant Water Project

Harare, Zimbabwe water project with St. Helena Rotary. St. Helena Rotarians will share the story of a successful grass-roots project to deliver clean water and sanitization practices to two villages outside of Harare, Zimbabwe. St. Helena Rotary and the Harare Rotary Club, with financial support from several District 5130 (including our club!). St. Helena Rotarians John Muhlnher, Kathleen Patterson and Dan Balfe will share the heartbreaks and successes of this project. The outcomes from this Rotary world service project - which our club has helped support - are inspiring!

March 11, 2022 – Shirley Zindler, Founder of Dogwood Rescue - Pet rescues and adoptions in Sonoma County

Bring your Pets to Rotary Day! Bring Fido and Fluffy to Rotary and learn about this wonderful organization. Maybe you'll even pick up some tips on how to take care of your own pets.



March 18, 2022 – Richard Ogg – Thoughts from a Bodega Fisherman

Richard Ogg, a well-known veteran fisherman from Bodega Bay will speak to us about the current state of our local fishing industry. Richard serves on various Ocean and Fishing Boards and is frequently quoted in our local news on fishing related topics. Richard docks his 54-foot boat named *Karen Jeanne* in Bodega Bay. We are fortunate to have him share his viewpoints on his decades experience fishing our local waters.