



THE ACORN

THE ROTARY CLUB OF FAIR OAKS

The Acorn for January 4, 2016

MERISTEM

A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM
FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



The Rotary Club of Fair Oaks

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Weekly Meetings

We Meet Almost Every Monday Evening
Social Hour 6:15 - 7:00 PM
Dinner & Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Location: Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse
7997 California Avenue
Fair Oaks

Visitors are Welcome

MERISTEM - A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Speaker: Oliver Cheney

Reporters: Cliff Straehley & Bruce Vincent



Speaker, **Oliver Cheney**
President, Meristem

Meristem: Helping Young Adults With Autism

Reporter: Cliff Straehley

Oliver Cheney is the President of Meristem. He has worked for about 17 years in the field of autism. It was wonderful to listen to a man who has passion for his occupation and extensive clinical experience, and who cares deeply about his students. Meristem is a program for young adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) which combines one-on-one mentoring with living among people who are a supportive community. The Meristem campus is located within Rudolph Steiner College.

Mr. Cheney explained that there are no medications which can significantly alter the primary pathology of autism, even though medications can sometimes be useful for the control of problematic behaviors. The focus of the Meristem program is dealing with the current manifestations of autism, not the root causes.

People with autism have a tendency to focus on specific things. In dealing with the manifestations of autism in young adults, it doesn't work well to first teach them about abstract concepts and generalities. It's hard for them to relate those generalities to particular situations. Meristem therefore uses involvement in real-life activities as opportunities for "hands-on" training and experience. For example some students work at a farmers' market, where they inevitably learn about economics, marketing skills, and customer relations. It's easier for them to generalize after having had these hands on experiences. At Meristem, there's also a focus on identifying the unique abilities of a particular student and building on those, as opposed to focusing on their disability or what's missing. The main goal of the program is to support each student in actualizing their unique potential, so that they can learn to make meaningful contributions in real life.

Mr. Cheney explained the concept of neuroplasticity. When I lived in Hawaii I knew about a four-year-old boy with a dangerous brain tumor involving the part of his brain responsible for muscular coordination. That entire part of his brain needed to be excised. Right after his surgery, when he tried to eat an ice cream cone, he accidentally stuck it on his forehead. However, by the age of 15 he was a black belt in karate. Different parts of the brain can be trained to compensate for other parts which may have limitations. This is neuroplasticity.

It is now known that human beings are far less determined by their genetic makeup (nature), than was previously believed. Skillful interactions in their environment (nurture), can make a tremendous, positive difference. As an aside, I can highly recommend a movie I've never forgotten about a wonderful woman with autism who nevertheless was a true genius in her areas of expertise. Her name was Temple Grandin. Her genius transformed the meatpacking industry. Fortunately she was surrounded by caring people who empowered her. We are fortunate to have Mr. Cheney in our community leading an effort to empower young adults with ASD.

Mr. Cheney noted that individuals with autism have certain traits that are invaluable for any position: reliability, organization, honesty, commitment and the ability to follow processes. What has been lacking is a bridge to connect them to the workforce. According to Mr. Cheney, we need new approaches to support and empower young adults with ASD. Meristem seeks community and business partners to work with ASD adults and provide future employment opportunities.

What is Meristem?

Reporter: Bruce Vincent

Meristem is a postsecondary transition program for young adults (18 – 21 years old) with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental differences. It is reportedly the first school of its kind in the United States. The principles and methods of Meristem are based on those developed at Ruskin Mill College in Great Britain. Meristem provides practical skills education, independent living skills and a transition to work program all on a 13-acre campus within the Rudolf Steiner College. Other than sharing acreage, Meristem is not otherwise a part of Rudolf Steiner.

What follows is an abridged description of Meristem from their website.

The real world is our classroom

The three-year day and residential program uses a contemporary apprenticeship model to develop contextualized, transferable skills to transition young adults into work life. Students learn in highly personalized ways. Learning is individualized, structured, and self-directed.

Awaken the possible

MERISTEM serves young adults on the autism spectrum by helping them develop practical life skills, increase social capacity, and transition to work and independence. We build the foundation for a productive life by helping to optimize the potential of each individual. A special emphasis is placed on preparing students for entry into the workforce or pursuing higher education.

Learning through doing

Our students learn to create – jewelry, clothing, a film, or a harvest of food. They learn resiliency, to embrace failure, to feel a sense of accomplishment. That sense of purpose, meaning, and value translates to growth, life-long learning, and work.

Increasing social capacity

The program develops social skills that ultimately lead to a stronger sense of self, healthy relationships with others and a recognition of one's place in the world.

The Meristem program includes:

- Transformative movement
- Digital media
- Culinary arts and nutrition
- Equine therapy
- Sustainable agriculture
- Carpentry and woodwork
- Independent living skills
- Farm and animal care
- Textiles, jewelry, and metal work
- Filmmaking & photography

Continued on Page 4

What is Meristem?

Continued from Page 3

Transition to work and independence

A central aspect of the MERISTEM method involves preparing students for life after graduation. Throughout the three-year program, students build skills to enter the workplace or higher education. Entering the workforce is a hallmark of the program. Our transition-to-work program develops vocational skills through work experience. Students grow and sell food from the campus farm, work in the culinary arts center, the campus café, or bookstore. With MERISTEM's emphasis on community life, we seek opportunities to partner with local businesses for work placements and internships. We help graduates find work in the community or enter college.

A place to live, learn and grow

Our flagship campus is located on 13 beautiful acres in Sacramento, California near the American River. MERISTEM consists of visual and practical arts classrooms, a working farm, a performing arts auditorium, outdoor fields, academic classrooms, an equine center, student café, bookstore, and residential living areas. The Independent Living Center is the home to our residential students. Each suite contains 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a full kitchen, living room, and an outdoor patio or balcony.

An inclusive and integrated community

Our community is integrated with a teacher training college, farm apprenticeship program, community supported agriculture (CSA), and community workshops and events. Students develop skills through community integration and social inclusion.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



Pete Schroeder

A restructuring of the financial relationship between the club and its foundation is being discussed. Three modifications will be discussed and possibly voted on at the meeting of the Club Foundation's Board of Directors on January 16 at 9:00 AM at Pete's clubhouse at 5201 Primrose.

Pete will hold a forum on this matter at 5:30 PM on January 11 at our Community Clubhouse, immediately prior to the regular club meeting. The proposed modifications will be presented and the attending members will be able to ask questions, engage in discussions and express concerns and/or support.

The purpose of the forum is to develop a consensus of opinion and approach to hopefully make the meeting of the Foundation Board on January 16 be smooth and unprolonged.

Crab Feed Update

6 Weeks To Go

Straight to the point....here are the priorities I hope each of you are working on....

Advertisers and Sponsors: This program is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to do business with individuals in the greater Fair Oaks area. Please read information from Keith on how to get your message to over 500 or over 1,000 persons. If someone asks about donating a service for the Silent Auction, please suggest that an ad offering a discount could reach more people. See Sunny, Keith or Jim C for assistance.

Silent Auction & FunDraw: Now is the time to get those items turned in, starting Monday, January 11th. You can take them to Linda at Sierra Vista Bank or to our meetings. Please be sure they are wrapped for easy and safe travel AND fill out a donation form to put with it. Contact Alice, Cathy, Bonnie or Vicki for help.

Can you visit wineries or breweries soon to ask for donations? Take donation forms and flyers with you when you go out to dinner. Leverage your contacts with businesses and professionals. Tell our story on what the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks does in the community!

Dessert Auction: Desserts have become a highlight of the Crab Feed! Please contact Kirsten or Rick Chang if you can provide a dessert, solicited or donated, for this auction. And fill out a donation form to include with your dessert.

Tickets: We will soon be at the crunch time for ticket sales. Please turn in your money or extra tickets to Anne as quickly as possible. If you are requesting additional tickets, she will help you the best she can since our demand continues to grow beyond capacity.

Special need for 2 pickup trucks or vans: Thursday, February 18th, the cooks need to move cooking equipment from a local church to Divine Savior. Please let Don Hicks know if you can help.

Thank you to all the chairpersons and other key people who are working hard now so we are ready for Crab Feed 2016! Please contact me if I can help in any way.

Beth Wilcoxon
Crab Feed 2016 Chairperson
BRLW@pacbell.net
916-208-2477

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Karen Romines

The MegaDraw continues to need help. Karen listed the items that are still needed. Most of them are :

- Lunch for a private wine tasting at Jodar Winery.
- Two nights in a hotel for the Disneyland prize
- Cash donations for the highly popular \$1,000 prize
- Food for the night at the River Cats

Grant Projects: A survey of the members showed that almost all of the members want a big grant project that would, for example, help the needy or the homeless.



Cliff Strahley will be the club's Community Service Director for 2015-16.

The Community Service Director has overall responsibility for the annual grant project. For example, the 2013-14 grant project was the completion of the recreation trail in Phoenix Park.

Cliff will host a meeting of those interested in developing a meaningful 2015-16 grant project. The meeting will be held at Cliff's house. A date and time have not been announced.



Jeanne Maloney, our current Community Service Director, reminded everyone that the Senior Luau is fast approaching. The date is January 20. Volunteers are needed. Please see Jeanne.

This is a Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District event. The club helps out by providing staff for the event. Club members help disabled seniors, man the doors, work in the kitchen and serve food and members of the Bella Vista Interact Club wait tables.



Anne Browning, President Elect for 2015-16, is starting early on the 2016 Fair Oaks Uncorked. Please begin soliciting wineries and restaurants NOW. When you visit a winery or a restaurant (especially if you spend money there) be sure to mention Uncorked. If they participated in this year's Uncorked, be sure to thank them – and, of course, identify yourself as a member of the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks.

Ed note: About a month ago we were part of a party of six dining at a local restaurant. I told the owner that we were there because they served food at Uncorked and I got a spontaneous hug from her.



Beth Wilcoxon, Crab Feed Chair

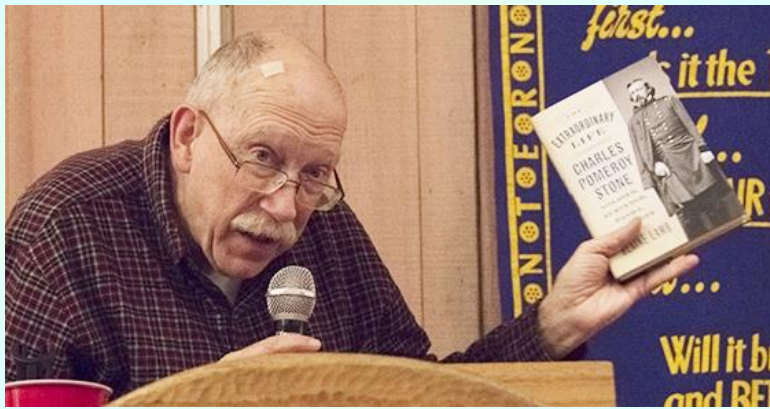
1. Sell Tickets – and turn in the money
2. Obtain sponsors and donors
3. We will have crab. The season has opened in Oregon, Washington and parts of California
4. There will be a crab-feed committee meeting immediately prior to the January 25 club meeting
5. Crab may be more expensive this year, so line up those donors and sponsors

BLAINE LAMB: LITTLE GENIUS



Normally we don't pay much attention to Little Genius in the Acorn, instead saving space for more important announcements and news, such as Warren's wine-cubby give away. But Monday's ten minutes of time with Little Genius **Blaine Lamb** was momentous.

Blaine immediately announced that this was his first month as Little Genius in 15 long years and that, during those 15 years of Rotary negelect, he amassed a great deal of animosity. Blaine promised REVENGE, a lot of REVENGE. In the revenge department, Blaine got off to a very poor start by fining himself for something piddly.



And then, overwhelmed by excitement over the publishing of his new book, Blaine forgot all about revenge and jumped straight into happy fines. Blaine paid the first happy, fine which gave him a chance to wave around his copy of his book and tell everyone that it is now available on Amazon.

In all seriousness, the title of the book is "The Extraordinary Life of Charles Pameroy Stone: Soldier, Surveyor, Pasha, Engineer" and there are only 17 copies left at Amazon.

Blaine has a PhD in history and, unlike most people who majored in history, he probably spent his entire career working in the field. According to Amazon, Blaine was Chief of Archaeology, at the History and Museums Division of California State Parks when he retired.



A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM VIRGINIA GRABBE



Dear Members of Fair Oaks Rotary Club,

What a beautiful visit with all of you!! Thanks for the song when I entered the room - it made me feel very happy.

You are a great group of people, you do great work in our community, and I feel honored to be an Honorary Member!!!

I love to come to meetings and attend functions during the year. You all make me feel so very welcome. I guess I'm the "oldie but Goodie" in the group!!

Thank you for the gorgeous cake, song and floral arrangement. Thanks for including me in your esteemed group.

Love ya all,
Virginia

LETTER TO THE EDITOR FRED ROWE COMMENTS



Dear Editor:

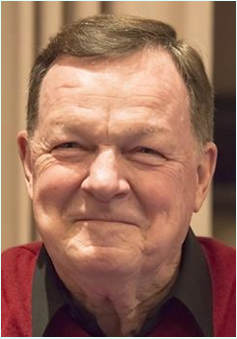
I would like to thank you for printing the interesting and informative biography of me in last week's ACORN. I had forgotten a lot of the details of my fascinating life and I appreciate the digging your reporter must have had to do to uncover them; I'm thankful that she didn't probe any further, however.

Also, people have used many adjectives to describe me, but I think you're the first one to use "distinguished". What's that about?

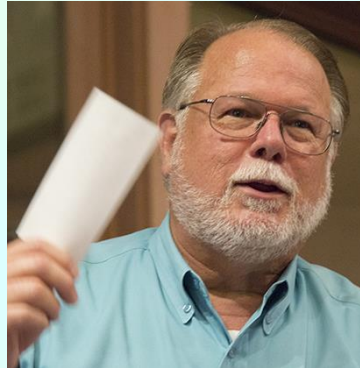
Otherwise, keep up the fine work.

Fred Rowe

SOCIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ron Adams announced that he and **Sunny Simmons** were recently married in Las Vegas. Ron allowed the members to join the celebration by covering the bar bill at the meeting. Congratulations and thanks to Ron and Sunny.



Bill Wagner is happy, as he should be, because his daughter has a 3.7 GPA in graduate school.



Carsen Tazi announced that she is pregnant. Congratulations to Carsen and her husband, Mehdi.

Ed Note: A question for the club historian. Is the first pregnancy ever for an actual member of the club?



And on a lesser note: Sadly, **Warren McWilliams** had to have his solar water heater replaced with a gas-fired water heater – which meant that Warren’s wine locker had to be converted to a water-heater cabinet. Should anyone be interested, Warren is giving away all of his wooden, stackable wine storage cubbies.



Karen & Pete Romines have a new grandbaby



Rotary Club of Fair Oaks



Birthday & Anniversary Report

Sorted By Date

Member Birthdays

Name	Date
Bechthold, Russ	Jan 01
Browning, Anne	Jan 04
McClain, Bonnie	Jan 12
Simcoe, Geoff	Jan 15
Papworth, Howard	Jan 18
Hinkelman, Lloyd	Jan 20
Maddox, Mike	Jan 21
Gaston, Charles	Jan 26

Anniversaries

Name	Spouse Name	Years	Date
No anniversaries found.			

Date Joined Rotary

Name	Years	Date
Adams, Ron	7 years	Jan 01 2009
Darrow, Ted	21 years	Jan 01 1995
Herrick, Greg	6 years	Jan 01 2010
Shepherd, Neil	1 Year	Jan 05 2015
Maddox, Mike	9 years	Jan 08 2007
Ainsworth, Alice	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Applegate, Jean	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Floyd, Bobbie	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Hardy, Mollie	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Huss, Shirley	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Monroe, Naoni	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Purcell, Bev	3 years	Jan 28 2013
Stauber, Jerry	3 years	Jan 28 2013

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION or TOPIC
Club Form on the Fair Oaks Rotary Foundation	January 11, 2016 5:30 PM	Clubhouse
Club Meeting at the Clubhouse	January 11, 2016	Speaker: Kelly Coleman Topic: Save the Rain
Club Foundation Board Meeting	January 16, 2016 9:00 AM	5201 Primrose (Pete Schroeder's Clubhouse)
No Club Meeting	January 18, 2016	
Senior Luau	January 20, 2016	Clubhouse
Club Board Meeting	January 20, 2016	TBA
Crab Feed Committee Meeting Clubhouse @ 5:30 PM	January 25, 2015	Crab Feed Preparation
Club Meeting at the Clubhouse	January 25, 2016	Speaker: Joe Scheimer Topic: The Secret War in Laos
Inner Wheel Bunco Night	January 30, 2016	TBA
Club Meeting at the Clubhouse	February 1, 2016	Speaker: Oscar Arias Topic: Rotary & Peace
Club Meeting at the Clubhouse	February 8, 2016	Crab Feed Preparation Beth Wilcoxon, Chair
No Club Meeting	February 15, 2016	
Crab Feed	February 20, 2016	Divine Savior
No Club Meeting	February 22, 2016	
Club Meeting at the Clubhouse	February 29, 2016	Inner Wheel Spaghetti Night (A fundraiser for Inner Wheel)