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Week #41 of Cliff's Riffs!

April 23, 2010

The Rotary Club of Columbia/Patuxent **Fridays, 7:30 a.m. Vantage House, 5400 Vantage Point Rd.**

Guests: No guests

Visiting Rotarians: Steven Sachs and Helena Seidel – Columbia Evening Club

Make-ups: No make-ups reported this week

Past President Dave presides over a smaller than normal group today...we barely filled 3 tables! No moments...heck, we had no greeter. David Crumbley jumped in at the last moment with a prayer.

Vocational Moment: Foundation Moment: Membership Moment: notta

Announcements:

Pam announced that the Columbia Pro Cantare is having a concert on May 1st at 8 p.m. at the Rouse Theater. Tickets are \$23 for adults and \$20 for seniors/students. (\$25 and \$22 respectively at the door). There is also a fundraiser in which you vote \$5 dollars (per vote) for a distinguished Howard Countian to conduct the *Stars and Stripes Forever*. Our own Caroline Sherman is a contender, so hurry and submit your ballots and dollars by April 26th.

Steven Sachs announced that his non profit group, Taste of Home, is having a golf fundraiser on May 17th at 11 a.m. This group provides hams to our national guard troops that are deployed.

Lon announced that the water project meeting is cancelled today due to members not able to meet.

Alan announced that the Vino Scholastico event for Howard County Community College is coming up soon. This is a two-part event, which you can buy tickets separately for both elements. See Alan for more details.

Blaine and Dave would like to get a table of Rotarians for the May 14th Festival of the Arts kick off event, which features Second City. Tickets are \$150/person.

Program:

Gary Meynard joined us – the Secretary of Maryland's Correctional Services

- Gary has worked in and around prisons for 40 years. He is also retired from the Oklahoma National Guard
- Gary has experience with prison work nationwide and also consults worldwide.
- Maryland's Correctional Services is the largest agency in the state with a \$1.4B budget, 11,500 employees and 24,000 inmates.
- Baltimore City also has a police booking location with over 80,000 individuals booked annually.
- 70,000 individuals in Maryland are under parole supervision...900 of them in Howard County.
- Correctional Services is like a mini-city. There is a component called "Prison Industries" which makes all the goods for the prison system with the work of inmates. Gary strongly believes that inmates should work within the system. This offsets costs and also helps them gain skills to be used upon their release.
- Inmates also provide work for the public and for non-profits. Gary shared that they are very careful to not take jobs from the workforce but to provide labor for projects. He said that surprisingly organizations are reluctant to accept the free labor.
- An example project that inmates have worked on is planting trees to help the Chesapeake Bay. They have planted over 400,000 trees in 2 ½ years, with the trees paid for with a grant by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
- Inmates also make oyster cages to help purify the bay. One oyster will purify 2 gallons of water per hour, so it is very helpful to increase the oyster population. Inmates will build cages to help grow the oysters, which are later placed in the bay.
- Another project to help the bay is the planting of grasses, which helps filter water. The grasses are raised from seed and then planted by inmates.
- Pam asked Gary about dog training by inmates, and if Maryland did this? Gary explained that this is an important part of their system. The dogs come from animal rescue and are trained basic obedience skills before being placed up for adoption. This helps the inmates learn valuable skills. In addition, there is also a program for horses in which 6 inmates work with 4 horses and then adopt them out. Working with animals helps the inmates develop respect and trust.
- A question came up about how budget cuts have impacted the prison system? Gary answered that despite reduced budgets he can still increase programs, such as education. He did this by ensuring that all classes were completely maximized in the system. He found that classes were only 89% filled. Since the expenses were already in place, he worked to raise enrollment up to 97%, which gave more skills to inmates.
- Joan asked about hiring paroled individuals, and said that it was difficult to know how to support them. Gary acknowledged that "re-entry" is an issue however they do try to address problems in prison. Their goal is to help inmates gain the skills or receive treatment for the issues that brought them to jail. For example, there are 3,000 seats for 6-month drug treatment programs. Another goal is to connect a released prisoner with a community support agency to help them transition. Gary and Joan agreed that inmates are great employees that want to work. Gary added that inmate labor is no better than any other labor – it just comes down to how you manage and motivate.
- Doug asked about the re-citizen rate for Maryland, which Gary answered was at 50%. The governor has challenged him to reduce by 5% in 5 years. Gary said that they focus on teaching literacy, providing GED and also teaching job skills. These items all make it 3x more likely for an inmate to succeed outside of prison and not return.
- We learned during the presentation that Lon worked for Gary's uncle back in Oklahoma...small world.

Happy Dollars:



Many happy dollars for the program today, including Dave, Mary, Lon (who was thrilled that the speaker was a fellow “Oakie”, David, Katie, Doug, Alan, Jim Lee, Blaine, Leon, Dave and Pam.

David Crumbley is happy that Pam’s knee is recovering well and she is back with us today and walking
Alan is happy that his daughter has been accepted at all 4 colleges applied to, and she has received great scholarships at 3, however...she selected the one without the scholarship.

Fines: **Substitute Sgt. Doug** fined Alan for calling our speaker an “Oklahomian”; Lon was fined a dollar that had probably been the pocket of every Oklahoma resident; Leon was fined a “no means no” dollar for continuing to ask questions after the program was finished and lastly Doug fined himself for being prepared but not following through with the poetry he had planned. Lon paid a late dollar and Katie a scooter dollar.

Upcoming Programs: (available at www.columbiarotary.com)

April 30 **Columbia Festival of the Arts** 2010 preview

Upcoming Events:

April 30 HCC’s **Vino Scholastico**, 7:30-10:30 p.m. See **AJ**
May 6 Col. Foundation **Spring Party + twentyfivefortyfive After Party**
* new* May 14 **Black Tie and Bathtub Gin – An Evening with Second City** to kick-off Columbia Festival of the Arts June 11-26 – see **Blaine**
June 4-5 Am. Cancer Society’s **Relay for Life** at Hammond High School
June 12 **Boat Float** at Lake Kittamaqundi + kick-off to Festival of the Arts
June 26 **Annual Dinner**/Induction of new Officers of the club – see **Dawn**

	<u>Greeter/Gracer</u>	<u>Founditioner</u>	<u>Vocationator</u>
April 30	Dave Bittner	Jeff Wiley	Sherri Brogan
May 7	Sherri Brogan	Leon Wilson	Dave Bittner
May 14	Mary Cain	Ken Solow	Dawn Audia
May 21	Katie Essing	Pam Young	Joan Athen
May 28		Jamie Hibbard	

Membership Moments

April 30 Dave Lerer
May 14 Renee Madden
May 28 Sherri Brogan
June 11 Darrell Nevin

April Rotarian Anniversaries:

Rob Roy 1 year
Sherri Brogan 2 years
Dan Scherr 2 years
Dave Bittner 7 years

April Rotarian Birthdays:

Ken Solow April 14
Charlie McCabe April 27

Howard County Rotary Clubs make a make-up today!

- **Clarksville Rotary Club, Maple Lawn Community Center, Tuesdays 7:45 a.m.**
- **Columbia Rotary Club, Eggspectations, Tuesdays @ 6:30 p.m.**
- **Columbia Town Center Rotary Club , Sheraton Inn, Wednesdays @ 12:15 p.m.**
- **Elkridge Rotary Club, Furnace Inn, Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m.**
- **Ellicott City Sunrise Club, Tersiguel's, Thursdays @ 7:15 a.m.**
- **Ellicott City Rotary Club, Tersiguel's Thursdays @ noon**

**** Next Meeting: April 30, 2010 ****