

Rotary News, June 3, 2019, Submitted by Charles Ofstein

President Jeannie Brandenberger rang our meeting to order at approximately 12:10 PM. The club sang the Star-Spangled Banner. We were accompanied by Rotarian John Dilworth on the piano. Our invocation was given by Rotarian Jeff Ross.

Arts News was presented by Rotarian D. Terry Williams. Dann reminded us of several events in the local arts community, including several upcoming downtown art festivals. Please continue, as always, to support the arts in Kalamazoo.

There were no visiting Rotarians today. Guests to this meeting (and their Rotarian hosts) included Jim Walters (Barb W.) and Hillary Kerr (Deb H.) Welcome!

Rotarian Tim, in honor of our shortened, hour-long meeting, introduced the club to the world's shortest song, the 45 second Pen Pineapple Apple Pen by Pikotaro. Enjoy it (several times again) at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct6BUPvE2sM&list=RDCt6BUPvE2sM&start_radio=1&t=6

Rotarian Deb Harris introduced our newest member, Hilary Kerr, next. Hilary comes to us every Monday from Watervliet, Michigan. She has a masters in gerontology with a focus on health literacy and elder advocacy. In addition to teaching gerontology at Western Michigan University, she is an advance care planning specialist at Bronson Healthcare. Welcome, Hilary!

Next, President Jeannie announced several upcoming club events during the first week of June. She also announced that the club met its Polio Plus goal during the last week of May.

Time for Happy Bucks!

- Rotarian Barb reminded the club of another popular song choice, In the Good Old Summertime (containing the lyrics "She's your tootsie wootsie").
- Rotarian Rob congratulated Rotarians Dan Ingles and Sandy Bliesener on a successful flag fundraiser this past Memorial Day. All proceeds raised from the flag sale will benefit Operation R.A.Y.
- Rotarian Dan congratulated Rotarian Barb Walters for her great persistence in getting him personally involved in Casa Amparo several years ago.
- Rotarian Nathan announced that he was unscathed in a recent car accident, for which we are all grateful. He also contributed in honor of the Interact club.
- Rotarian Dave was proud to announce that another one of his STRIVE mentees will be off to college in the Fall.

For our presentation, Rotarians Barb Walters and Dan Hartlieb provided us with an update on the club's efforts at Casa Amparo, a "house of shelter" for girls in Reynosa,

Mexico. Reynosa sits right across the US border near McAllen, Texas. The staff of Casa Amparo, with funding assistance from our club and District 6360 (among others,) seeks to provide a home for abandoned children with no support in that area.

Our club has specifically supported the teacher at Casa Amparo for the past 10 years. The vision for this effort came from Bill Parker. He presented on the club in 1993 as a fill in for a canceled speaker. His presentation was met with silence by a stunned club, who asked "what can we do to get to the heart of the issue?" Sensing a need for education, community leaders and the club board began an endowment fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. That endowment has grown (in large part due to this club's efforts in 2004) to \$185,000. The income is now used to pay the teacher of the girls at Casa Amparo!

Dan described what it has been like to visit Casa Amparo during the past ten years. Using photos, he described several strengths of Casa Amparo. He also left the club with several challenges that Casa Amparo currently faces. These include cartel violence. In fact, cartel violence has been so bad during the past few years that graduates of Casa Amparo are encouraged not to go to the local college. Casa Amparo is currently stressing additional education opportunities elsewhere for their graduates.

Thank you, Barb and Dan, for updating us on the club's efforts at Casa Amparo.