

Fighting Poverty on a Small Scale

ABSENCES – July 24

A few

MAKEUPS – July 24

Maybe

VISITORS – July 24

Shain Segars

PROSPECTIVE MEMBER

Shain Segars

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

08/14/19	Ty Williams – Lyn Scarbrough, Lindy’s Sports
08/21/19	Vic Modic - Ron Appuhn – RI Projects
08/28/19	Pat McTamney
09/04/19	No meeting (1 st Wednesday)
09/11/19	Jim Meads

News of the Weird

A 16-year-old driver was pulled over by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Manitoba, Canada, on June 6 after being clocked driving 105 mph, according to Fox News. The teenager was driving a Chevrolet Camaro, but it wasn't the muscle car that made him go so fast, he said. He told police he had just eaten hot chicken wings and really needed to use the bathroom. Officers were unmoved, however, tweeting, "Absolutely #noexcuses for that kind of speed." The teen was fined and is likely to have his license suspended. [Fox News, 6/9/2019]

On June 5, firefighters arrived at an apartment complex in Inglewood, a suburb of Los Angeles, to find a 14-year-old girl trapped feet-first in a chimney. By removing some bricks, they were able to free her after about 20 minutes, and she was taken to a hospital to be evaluated. "A lot of people think it's plausible to go ahead and get into your house or break into a house (through a chimney)," Brian Stevens, an inspector for the fire department, told the Los Angeles Times. "I can tell you that doesn't seem to work out for most people. It's very narrow." Good to know. [Los Angeles Times, 6/5/2019]

In Scotland, Zoe Archibald, 34, thought it would be fun to take a ride in a child's Little Tikes red and yellow car on June 7. When she couldn't get in the plastic car in the conventional way, she put it over her head, Fox News reported -- and then got stuck. "There was no way she could get herself out," her nephew, Matthew Shepherd-Bull, said. After being trapped for about an hour, her father finally cut her out of the toddler conveyance with a butter knife. "Everyone found it funny, even Zoe," Shepherd-Bull said. "She was a bit panicked but mainly found it funny." [Fox News, 6/12/2019]

In the fall of 2015, volunteers from Rotary and Heifer International came together to build hoop houses for a few farmers working small lots in Arkansas, USA. The afternoon outing was part of a larger project that is still reaping benefits four years later, supporting small-scale agriculture in the region and increasing access to locally-grown food. Heifer has been using the small-scale agriculture model for decades to alleviate hunger and fight poverty around the world. The approach has the added benefits of being environmentally friendly and offering healthier food options.

That mission dovetails with Rotary’s mission to grow local economies and improve health. So it’s not surprising the two groups have teamed up on a number of occasions in the past 30 years to improve communities by helping families escape poverty. Several Heifer employees are or have been members of the Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, the city where Heifer has its headquarters.

“Our values line up very well,” says Ardyth Neill, a member of the Little Rock club and president of the Heifer Foundation. “With Rotary, it’s Service Above Self and helping to serve others. Heifer has been working with farmers to be accountable, pass on their gifts, train other farmers, and work together in community. It’s learning to share and care, basic things that work well together.”

In the United States and other developed nations, a lot of food production is controlled by large industrial operations, which produce cheaper food by focusing on a single crop and using specialized equipment to cut labor costs. But according to research into sustainable agriculture, this food model has downsides, including a reliance on commercial fertilizers, heavy pesticides, and other chemicals that can harm the environment.

The trend has also contributed to the failure of smaller family farms, increasing the poverty rates in places like rural Arkansas. Nationwide distribution networks have also resulted in food deserts in urban areas, particularly in the U.S., England, and Australia, where poor neighborhoods have little access to fresh produce and instead rely on less nutritious fast foods and packaged products.

Small-scale sustainable agriculture, on the other hand, tends to keep things local. The money you spend on food stays in your community and helps your neighbor. Farmers maximize land use by planting multiple crops that replenish the soil and reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides. And fruits and vegetables grown closer to home keep more of their nutrients.

Consumers are increasingly aware of these health benefits, fueling the market for local produce. “There’s a phenomenon going on, really nationwide, about people becoming more and more concerned and thoughtful about where their food comes from,” says Sharon Vogelpohl, a past president of the Little Rock Rotary club and a volunteer on the project.

(to be continued)