

North Notes

Spokane-North Rotary Club

February 3, 2025

- **Feb. 6, 5:30 pm:** Spokesman-Review facility tour
- **Feb. 10:** Noon luncheon at the Bark. Speaker: Paulette Burgess, public defender.

Announcements:

- **John Mailliard** awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship to past-president **Melinda Keberle**.
- Our thoughts are with **Chuck Rehberg**, at home with a broken leg.
- **Laura Zahn** had reminders about two upcoming events:
 - The Spokesman-Review facility tour is completely booked. The tour begins at 5:30 pm on February 6.
 - She asked members to sign up to work at the Habitat for Humanity Re-store from 9:30 am to noon. You can use the Sign-Up Genius email she sent earlier.
- **Ron Noble** reminded members of the upcoming Holmes Heroes program.



Melissa is awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship

Happy Bucks:

- **Steve Boharski** was \$5 happy that he will soon be travelling to Australia and New Zealand for a 5-week vacation.
- **Melinda Keberle** was happy that Mike Starck was here as our speaker and that she will be vacationing in the Philippines next week.
- **Amy Jo Carlson** was happy for some great weekend skiing at Schweitzer.
- **Paulette Burgess** is just happy.
- **Mike Stark** (principle at Grover Middle School) is happy to be at our club, while getting a short reprieve from dealing with kids.
- Ron is happy to recall the 1994 ceiling fire he discovered while in bed, while getting creative in how he extinguished it.

Catching at-risk kids while still young

Melinda introduced Mike Stark, Principle at Glover Middle School. Mike visited us to brief us on a program we will be aiding with an upcoming donation.

Mike introduced himself by describing his childhood, where he grew up on a farm with parental expectations that he attend college. Following his graduation, he spent ten years as a math teacher and

twenty-four more as a principle. But he readily admitted that he could have been just as happy had he been allowed to pursue a professional trade like welding.



Principle Stark addresses the club

Glover is in a blue-collar-leaning community, where a kid's chances of attending college are often hindered. Giving them an ability to pursue a high-paying trade is a way of keeping them in the system and not losing them to the streets.

Mike helped start a program called Falcon Welders, which is available both as a for-credit class and an after-hours club. This program is the only one of its type in our state for middle schoolers. The program is aimed at helping students learn a useful skill while having fun.

The program took two years to put together, with Mike looking into every nook and cranny to find the start-up money and permissions. The program currently has enough equipment to teach basic welding skills to a relatively small number of students, but the goal is to take it to the next level by teaching how to design and build real products. To do this, the program needs additional and more advanced equipment.

In particular, the immediate need is for a CNC plasma table, which is a computer-controlled machine used to cut metals. With this machine, the club can fashion metals into useful, everyday products. It is this type of machine that our club will be helping them obtain.

In addition to teaching students a useful trade, the program's greatest asset is giving students at risk of dropping out before high school a way to stay involved and active within the school system. The program connects with those kids that may be otherwise academically-challenged, while helping them realize their dreams of a professional career doing something they love.

Mike made a few more comments, along with receiving feedback from club members:

- Falcon Welders needs to grow to support more students. Currently able to handle about sixty students, there is demand by over five hundred students to join the program. More equipment is needed to do this, including specialized welders that can handle soft metals like aluminum.
- Glover feeds into North Central High School, which does not have a welding program. However, Mike collaborates with Shadle High School to take those students wishing to pursue welding in high school. There is also a Running Start program that lets high schoolers pursue professional welding certification as part of the program.
- Roughly a third of their participating students are girls, who Mike noted usually weld better than the boys.
- The students compete in welding competitions that are usually only attended by high schoolers. Even so, they hold their own against kids several years their senior.
- The kids have been learning how to fashion sellable products out of metal. The hope is that this might provide ways for the program to become more self-sustaining.
- While the program's teacher is a very dedicated, professional welder, the program could use more help to allow additional students to participate. This could include having professional fabricators come in to demonstrate techniques, volunteers with welding expertise to help teach, and other volunteers willing to come in and supervise and assist.
- Ron had some ideas on how to help expand the program and will work with Mike to make this happen.