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**Hanover Rotary Club Minutes**

**9/29/21 Weekly Meeting**

Brenda called the meeting to order at 6:52 PM.

**Blessing: Brenda**

**Pledge: Brenda**

**Attending Members:** Brenda, David Creasy, Glenn, Ken, Mike, Judson, Janice, Michelle, Rachel and Mike Swinford, Harvey, Judson, Robert, Ted

**Honorary Rotarian:** None

**Visiting Rotarians:** None

**Guests:** Sharon, a guest of Harvey’s and Tamera Wilkins Harris, Richmond Region Tourism

**Sergeant-at-Arms Report**: 14 Rotarians are present. Mike gave a joke

**Happy Bucks:**

Mike is happy and sad that is one tooth less

Rachel is happy because they are going to New Hampshire next week and will spend the week with her grandson

Janice is happy because of the job Rachel has been doing with the articles in the Local. Janice shared about her experience at the school job site and a friend who has donated her hair that took 3 years to grow.

**Rotary Minute:** Ken gave a Rotary Minute reminding us about the District 7600 conference at the Richmond Marriott Downtown, Oct 16 & 17, and discussed the fees and packages available.

**Announcements:**

District Conference – Oct 15-17 at Marriott Downtown Richmond. They are collecting socks, so please bring new

Recognized Michelle for putting together the school supply drive, as well as the helpers Janice, Aimee, Rachel, Brenda and Sammy (Michelle’s daughter) we did 62 teachers at 14 schools.

Peanut Sales are coming! Glenn has the form ready. Orders will be due by November 17. Peanut Sales are important source of income for the Club. They will be delivered on December 9 at the Christmas Party. Gift boxes are also available.

Adopt-A-Highway – October 23.

Washington Henry Sunshade Project needs volunteers – contact Brenda if you want to help.

Christmas Party – Ashcreek Clubhouse – December 9 (No meeting December 8)

**Program:**

The club welcomes Tamera Wilkins Harris from the Richmond Region Tourism. Even though there are still COVID impacts, the Richmond restaurants and hotels are getting back to normal.

In 2019 there were over 7.7 mill visitors to Richmond who spend $2.6 billion last year. ($7 million per day) there was 24,700 people working in the tourism industry. They market the Richmond Region (7 jurisdictions, Richmond, Henrico, Ashland, Hanover, New Kent Chesterfield, Colonial Heights) across the country and the world. There are 116 “Richmond’s” in the USA. The RRT’s job is to make Richmond, Virginia the top-of-mind Richmond.

In early 2020 the New York Times named RVA one of the top 52 places to go, but then Coronavirus hit. There was a major dip in visitors to the region, but it has picked up and there was increase over the July 2019 to 69.8% of hotel occupancy which is a record for RVA.

For COVID they added more pages about safety and hotels available. They have a YouTube channel to give a good picture of what they do.

HGTV is doing a show on 11 Black-Owned Business in Richmond, Virginia you have to Visit and Buzzfeed did a profile naming us the 3rd best Street Art due to our murals.

Many travel writers are coming to Richmond and giving us accolades.

The number 1 reason people come to visit is Friends and Family, but amongst the other reasons people go to a region, we have many of those in the area. Sports has really elevated Richmond as reason to visit because of the facilities and venues. There is a team of people who goes across the country to recruit people to the region.

There are plans to create a “Small City Center” pedestrian area with restaurants lining the street. Draft plan presented June 7.

Richmond Region website has a great blog telling

They have an “I am Tourism” Ambassador program, free where people can because a tour guide of Richmond. An attractions pass is awarded to people who participate which allows free or BOGO entrance.

Tamera described many of Richmond’s attractions, including Lewis Ginter, Street Art, King’s Dominion, VMFA, Richmond Metro Zoo, RIR, Keystone Truck and Tractor Museum in Colonial Heights, Virginia Capital Trail, a Beer Trail in Scotts Addition and more.

After Judson led the Club in the 4-Way test, Brenda adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Michelle Nelms