

Rotary



Club of Concord

Events

June 29th

**President Wanda's
Demotion Party**

Birthdays

Gwyn E Jones
September 5th

Bradford T. Prescott
September 11th

Christos C. Moulis
September 15th

William P. McQueen Jr
September 28th

Parmod Kumar
September 28th

Leticia Almaro Nicolini
September 29th

Barry J Gordon
September 30th

Nelson Meeks
October 6th

Nickolas Peterson
October 9th

09-06-2024 Concord Rotary Newsletter

By Anthony A. Akins

President **Jim Kohl** called the meeting to order and promptly led us in the pledge of allegiance.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Rick Ernst introduced **Niko Anagnostopolous** and **Ramona Mendieta**, visiting guests checking out our club.

Dave Litty introduced a former exchange student from ten years ago hosted by our club; **Avishai Tepper** and his girlfriend **Laura Maguire**.

Marilyn McClaskey introduced **Pablo Benvente**, who is checking out our club and is currently running for city council.

Jim Kohl introduced a neighbor and friend, **Young Cha Son**, who is also checking out Rotary.

A big thank you and welcome to all of our guests!

HAPPY BUCKS:

As usual, PR-hungry **Scott Singley** had a story to tell, claiming he was happy that while biking in Tahoe he was knocked over by a bear, got stitches and lived to tell the tale. This story was met with a large cry of "Is it the Truth", which Scott refused to answer.

Maybe Scott should run for city council.



Niko Anagnostopolous stated he was thankful and happy to be included in our meeting,

Bryan Keding was happy to share his new look sans beard and with a short haircut, looking ten years younger. The wine table had to card him!

Nick Virgallito had happy and sad bucks. Happy to spend time with his grandchildren, and sad that one of the grandchildren dislocated his shoulder while wakesurfing. Said child is on the mend and will be as good as new soon.

George Calhoun shared with us that he is pursuing the goal of attending every major league baseball park in the nation. Last week he made it to 4, so he is off to a strong start.

Gene Voelkel was happy to have joined us last Thursday at Cali-Craft but was sad to get back to his car to leave and find that it had been keyed. Definitely a big bummer.

CLUB ANNIVERSARIES:

Nichole Carranza 6 years

Greg Grassi 8 Years (in this club. He's celebrating 40 years in Rotary in a few months!)

Jerry Hoobler 21 years

BIRTHDAYS:

Gwyn E Jones Sept 5

Gwyn Jones Sept 5
Brad Prescott Sept 11

LAST WEEKS EVENTS:

Bryan Keding reported that the rehab to the teacher's lounge at YV High School has finished. Bryan, his staff and members of the club installed new carpet, a new refrigerator and microwave, as well as new paint and minor repairs. **Memory Woodard** donated a couch and set of chairs. Nice work!

FUTURE EVENTS:

Sept. 18 - **Dave Litty** updated us on the upcoming annual District Bocce Ball tournament in Martinez. While Dave has two teams, he is looking for more as either new teams or subs. If you want to participate or just show up for a day of fun, see Dave for details. I have gone twice when I wanted to and twice when I didn't and had a great time every time I went. A great event filled with food, drink, friends and fun.

Oct. 5-10 - **Dave** also reminded us of the upcoming fall seminar held from October 5-10. This district event is held every year, but this year it will be in Chicago. Right now, about 50 district Rotarians have signed up for sightseeing and classes at our headquarters in Evanston, Illinois. All district events are special - you make friends from other clubs and always have a good time catching up. Going to Chicago makes it a truly special occasion. Contact Dave, and he will help you join in this special trip, or if you can't go but want to be involved with the classes, know that it will be "zoomed" live as well.

Sept. 22 - **Ron Melvin** is again (35 years and counting) helping with the Special Olympics on Sunday, September 22 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. He is looking for some volunteers to help these athletes with low skills. See Ron for details.

Nick Virgallito, in his new role as the club Polio Warrior, updated us on this year's polio stats. 16 new cases of wild polio in Pakistan and 18 in Afghanistan. These are the last 2 countries where the wild poliovirus is still active and much work is being done to finish off this disease from the planet - Rotary's number one health goal. There are some vaccine-derived polio cases showing up in Gaza due to the war. Once again, Rotary and the World Health Organization have gotten two combatants to agree to stop fighting for three days so they can deliver 650,000 vaccines.



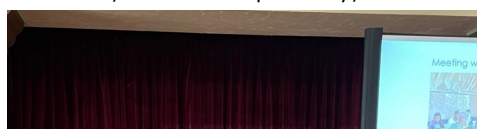
TODAY'S PROGRAM:

Michael Barrington and **Mike McConnel** gave us an update on our Gambia Rising project. This is the project where we helped build housing for teachers in a remote area of Gambia. In the past, the housing was so bad that the teachers who were obligated to teach for one year in these poor areas left after one year. Now that decent housing has been supplied for them, they are staying and education for girls has improved. Before, most girls were "married off" for a dowry as soon as menstruation occurred. There is a

great need to improve the literacy of Gambia, all for the obvious reasons. Getting teachers to stay and create continuity and keeping girls in school longer is a huge help to the local community.

Project cost: \$17,500

Houses built: Five houses (rooms) where two teachers can share a room, lock up their items, and more importantly, be safe.



For this project, all proceeds went to building the houses, as there were no paid staff. The Gambians made the bricks and blocks, and we paid for the other materials



needed. Both Mike's have been on site and in contact to make sure the project is successful.

In Gambia, these schools are run by the Catholics, but most students are Muslim. These schools are important as the alternative is to learn at madrassas, or Muslim schools. While this area does not practice extreme forms of Islam, if the schools are only madrassas, it is primarily a religious education

and not the three "R's.

New Grant: We applied for and received a Rotary District grant of \$12,500, which will be matched by our funds and other area Rotary clubs' funds, for a total budget of \$25,000 for our next project. This will go towards new housing and furthering the education of girls in this remote area of Gambia.

Rick Ernst reminded everybody that we will be at the John Muir Concord Campus this coming Friday, 9/13, for lunch and a program by speaker Mike Thomas, CEO. You must sign up as space is limited to 75. We are over 50, so let Rick know if you plan on attending. Remember to bring your ID and come early as parking is not always convenient.

DRAWING: Gene Voelkel had the lucky ticket and drew a white marble, so the pot grows.

Our speaker the following week will be Melissa Allen.

Upcoming Speakers

Club Leaders



[Jim Kohl](#)
President



[Sandra J. Newman](#)
Secretary



[William P. McQueen Jr](#)
Treasurer



[Gregory M. Grassi](#)
Treasurer
Endowment (T)



[Celia Veronica Valencia](#)
Fundraising



[Anthony A. Akins](#)
Rotary Foundation



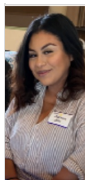
[Sean Duffey](#)
Membership Chair



[Rick Ernst](#)
Membership
Service



[Bryan E. Keding](#)
Community
Service



[Josephine Leiva](#)
Club Service Chair



[Elizabeth E. Willer](#)
International
Service Chair



[Dave Litty](#)
Vocational
Service



[Leslie Chapman](#)
Youth Service -
Interact



[Memory A. Woodard](#)
Youth Services
Chair



[Wanda D. Waltman](#)
iPast President