



President Martin Velten called the meeting to order and lead members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was given by Seth Weeldreyer. And the Art News was presented by Alisa carell. Visit the KIA website at [kazooarts.com](http://kazooarts.com) for a full list of activities.

**Visiting Rotarians:** Matt Schrock from South Bend.

**Guests:** Jeff Murphy introduced Dr. Dave Flagler who will be joining Rotary soon.

**Announcements:** President Martin announced that we are still encouraging members to make a contribution to Rotary Charities. By doing so, we can continue to support the good work of local non-profits as they support our community with a variety of services. Grants apps are accepted twice a year. President Martin also encouraged members to bring guests. As they see what fun we have and what we do to support our community, they may choose to join.

**Guatemala Reading Project Award:** As a result of our involvement in the Guatemala Reading Project, we have been asked to make an award to some Rotary members for their efforts to promote literacy through reading. Our own Jim Cupper came to the top through his involvement at public schools to read to students and his continued organization of our Rotary is for Reading project. Rotary is for Reading will happen during the week of April 22.

**Happy Bucks:** Rob Peterson gave just because. Taylor Huey gave to pitch her need for home hosts May 9-12 for students coming to Kazoo.

Aaron Winter congratulated the club on a successful Operation Ray. He read a couple of notes we received from deployed military people who received our packages. Brian Kaufman gave H.B's to celebrate the Lions great game in the play-offs. Rick Briscoe was celebrating the engagement of his grandson.

**PROGRAM:** Bob Miller introduced our speaker, Ben Lando. He is the co-founder of NOW Kalamazoo, and the Local Journalism Foundation. He was a former reported for the Wall Street Journal and also spent time in Bagdad. He has a family of four and has been part of the Kalamazoo Community on and off for years.

Ben began his journey into the local news arena in 2018 by launching NOW Kalamazoo. He has some local talent that you might recognize. Ben Jones on the technical side, Jim Stuphanik as a remote worker and Kristie May who will determine articles.

Ben discovered his love of journalism and has made it his mission to present local news as a service and not as a product. He wants news to be a premium experience and a source of continuous discovery focused on policies and power, inspirations and culture and entrepreneurs and business. He wants people to hear inspiring and success stories. He also wants to dispel wrong information on topics like COVID and more.

Traditional newspapers have seen a shut down rate of 25%. Ben knows that local journalism matters and he is filling that gap.