



**Today's Meeting** was called to order at 12:15 pm by President Martin Velten  
**Pledge of Allegiance:** President Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
**Invocation:** Invocation was provided by Sid Ellis

**Arts News** was delivered by Troy Thrash in his entertaining way by recognizing special events that happened on this day in history. He also warned us to use his special AIR ZOO glasses to observed the Solar Eclipse which is scheduled for April 8. It will not be a total eclipse but it will be 96% so it will be spectacular as long as we don't have a cloudy Michigan day.

Visit the Now Kalamazoo website at [NowKalamazoo – Local, Independent News](#) for a full list of activities and events happening in our area.

**Visiting Rotarians:** No visiting Rotarians

**Guests:**

- Jack Hopkins introduced his guest Jennifer Jackson, President of Jackson Insurance.
- Troy Thrash introduced Aaron Glass from the Smithsonian
- Jack Hopkins also introduced Jerry Albertson who will be rejoining Rotary.
- Bob Miller brought Laura Ellis from the WMU School of Medicine
- Chris Shook introduced Jim and Sue Brockolbank
- Marie Newhouse brought Maggie Hesketh who will be acknowledging the receipt of grant money from our club.

**Announcements:**

- Donations to the Kalamazoo Rotary Charity are encouraged and appreciated!
- Don't forget to sign up for Rotary for Reading (link) was just sent. Please sign up for this great event.
- Red Rose Citation award nominations are being accepted. Contact Jeff Murphy for more details.
- Help be a Host! Rotaract Student from Colorado in need of lodging from May 8-13<sup>th</sup>.
- Upcoming volunteer opportunities:
  - April 6<sup>th</sup> – Warrior Run, contact Dan Ingles for details.
  - April 9<sup>th</sup> – Hayes Park Clean up, contact Sandy Bliesener for details.
  - April 20<sup>th</sup> – Kalamazoo River Clean-up, contact Sandy Bliesener and Bill Rose for details.
  - April 22<sup>nd</sup> – Rotary is for Reading, contact Jim Cupper for details
  - May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Memorial Day Flag Project, contact Dan Ingles and Sandy Bliesener for details.
  - June 7<sup>th</sup> – Art of the Mall, contact Rob Peterson for details.

**Grant Recipient:** Maggie Hesketh from the 1<sup>st</sup> Day Shoe Fund came to give us a quick overview of what this program does for youth in the Kalamazoo County Schools. They distributed 4700 pairs of brand name shoes to 47 different school with kids in need. These are brand new shoes and in the lower grades where kids are growing quicker, they may have even provided an extra pair when needed. Follow them on their Facebook page or [www.firstdayshoefund.org](http://www.firstdayshoefund.org)

**Program:** President Martin Velten introduced Tim Rayman, Director of Catering at Greenleaf Hospitality Group, which is owned by Bill Johnson and Rhonda Stryker. Tim is a native of Michigan, is a WMU grad and is on the board at First Day Shoe Fund. He has also served on the board at South West Michigan First. Additionally, he has hosted PETS training for a number of years.

Tim spoke about the many companies that are part of the Greenleaf Hospitality Group, which include, the Radisson, the K-Wings, the Kalamazoo Country Club, and the Kalamazoo Events Center among others. They have a total of 780 employees at the moment but that will significantly increase as the Event Center is operational. Each employee is encouraged to volunteer in the community and they are given 8 hours a year to do that. Their Brand Promise is “to be the host of Kalamazoo” with a goal of a great experience.

Currently there are two projects underway. The Kalamazoo Country Club and the Event Center. Construction on the Country Club is underway with development of 485 acres. The project requires the movement of 440,000 tons of earth moved and 85,000 hours of manpower. There will be 4.5 acres of woods and 2/5 acres of natural grassland. The project will take four years to complete. Andrew Green is the designer of the golf course. If you drive down Oakland Drive you will see lots of activity.

The event center is expected to start moving earth in the fall of 2024.

Questions to Tim included whether there will be native trees planted.

**Next Week’s Program** will feature Kevin Brosevich Rose Street Advisors speaking on HR/Leadership. The meeting will take place in the Dining Hall of St. Luke’s (corner of Lovell and Park).