



Rotary Club of Kalamazoo

Date: 4/8/24

Editarian: Aaron Bradford

Today's meeting was called to order by President Martin Velten at 12:10 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: President Velten led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Rotarian Lucinda Stinson offered the invocation.

Arts News By: Dann Sytsma presented the latest arts news. American Realism exhibit is very well done. Visit the KIA, website at kazooarts.com for a full list of activities.

Visiting Rotarians:

- Marni Sawicki, Florida club
- Bill Nelson, Civil Engineering, Allegan Rotary Club
- Bruce Justin, Accounting, Sunrise Rotary

Guests:

- Steve Duisterhof's guest was Jeremiah Smith
- Sandy Bliesner's guest was Mike Stout

Announcements:

- Donation to Kalamazoo Rotary Charity encouraged
- Rotary for Reading, spots still open
- District Grant Seminars – DACdb, April and May
- District Leadership Training, KRESA, 4/10 5-7:30PM
- Back at Milestone Senior Services for regular meeting

Happy Bucks:

- Taylor Huie, first Rotaract Leadership Training. Eight leaders participated and KNAC.
- Brian, Family member surgery went well.
- Jim Cupper, reminder of packing books after next weeks meeting and sign up eight openings.
- Steve Duisterhof, Spent 65th birthday at an expo for his new small business. Andy Lethan's birthday – watching eclipse on 80th birthday.
- Amy Remmert, breakfast with grandson and caught up about spring break vacation.
- Jack Hopkins, thank Olivia on Milestone's catering staff. Lucinda thank you for prayer. Dann thank you for covering art minute.
- Don Flesche's 89th Birthday.
- Nick Boyd, thanks to Jim Cupper to Interact Sponsorship Service project in the Dominican Republic.

Program by Michael Stout, Founder and President of Michigan Waterways Stewards:

- Stout, a trailblazer in the realm of business development and transformational leadership. Stout's illustrious career as a C-level executive has been marked by his exceptional ability to rejuvenate and elevate national brands, scale regional companies to national prominence, evolve private label firms into branded titans, reverse the fortunes of declining businesses, and pioneer innovations across entire industries.
- Away from the boardroom, Stout embraces the challenge of long-distance solo paddling, a sport where he holds numerous unofficial world records. His adventurous spirit has led him to solo navigate Lake Michigan seven times, Lake Superior once, and to compete in arduous paddling races across the United States.
- Stout's dedication to combining his love for our waterways with his professional expertise has culminated in the founding of Michigan Waterways Stewards. This initiative represents his commitment to giving back to the community, the state of Michigan, and the sport of paddling, which has enriched his life profoundly.
- Michigan Waterways Stewards' mission is to protect and care for Michigan's treasured and vulnerable waterways for the benefit of fish and wildlife, recreation, and sport. Through our work we will inspire current and future generations to become environmental stewards. Join us. Make A lasting impact. This is our legacy.
- Less than two miles from our state's capital building there were terrible examples of water pollution and stretches of river that had been allowed to worsen for years. Stout was surprised by river conditions based on experience on world class waterways in Minnesota. Began advocacy, yet no response. Then State of Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy agency aware of the problem but not priority.
- Lansing rivers were transformed from unimaginable and unacceptable conditions. Removed 50-gallon barrels, bikes, refrigerators, etc.
- We now present the most scenic, varied, and pleasant urban waterways experience in Michigan.
- Community engagement makes this possible.
- News coverage is beginning to snowball.
- Eco Tour – purposively get people on the water. Reimagine, Rediscover, Reconnect.
- Kalamazoo public departments are very supportive. And quite committed. All in and fast movers/early adopters. From Comstock to Parchment. They help promote waterways and beyond.
- Great sponsorship response as well, especially given this is the inaugural year.

Next week's program will be about Ziegler Kalamazoo Marathon presented by Carrie Drake, Executive Director