



# Rotary Club of Kalamazoo

March 29, 2021

Editarian: Amy Remmert

**Today's** meeting was called to order by President Seth Weeldreyer at 12:15 p.m.

**National Anthem:** John Dillworth played the National Anthem.

**Invocation:** Sid Ellis gave the invocation. Today we pray to be a real service organization, caring and sharing with others.

**Arts News:** Art News was presented by D Terry Williams. Art Hop in person for the first time in a year. Exiting times for Friday evening. Live streamed concert at the State Theater. A grant writing workshop will be given by the Arts Council. Carver Center is presenting Body Fitness and Dance Conditioning. Visit the Arts Council for more. Website at [Kalamazooarts.org](http://Kalamazooarts.org) for details on our Rotary Website.

**Matt Deittrick a guest of Nancy Peterson.**

**Special announcement:** Rotary Hero nominations due by April 16<sup>th</sup>. Amy Remmert reported that the survey got quick response and members are split about half and half for in person meeting. Keep in mind that with a future in person meeting there will be a virtual option for those not comfortable meeting in person.

**Happy Bucks:** John Dillworth wrote a book called Life Guides. Jim Cupper for the great activity packing boxes for Operation Ray. Deb Harris – Interact has 8 members graduating.

## **The Program:**

Jeff Ross introduced Senator Sean McCann. Sean will introduce Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. He indicated that it was great to see everyone again. March is Women's History Month – Michigan has women in the three the top positions in our state Government. The last year has been challenging with the introduction of COVID and then the insurrection in Washington. We are living in an unfortunate environment with a lot of issues we need will to resolve.

Dana Nessel, hoped after the insanity of 2020 she that she will continue to push for clean water, dealing with environmental issues and upholding the will of the residents of the state. She has opened up a new identity theft program. Consumer protection was her first goal. This is designed to help get a person's good reputation back after their identity was stolen. An expungement law will give people an opportunity to get back their lives.

Attorney General Nessel indicated that the "witches" comment has caused a lot of turmoil. It all happened because of inaccurate statements made. Preserving the Republic will be a difficult

task. She has received many death threats as have the other two women at top. Debates about policy are not about demonizing each other but having meaningful discussion.

Jocelyn Benson is more hopeful. We need to demand better from our leaders. Constant drumbeat about three women being installed in the government has led to violence but we can emerge out of this. The election is over but the battle over our democracy is still on. We have seen good things – more people voting with secure elections and with more people of color voting. There was a lot of misinformation out there but we have risen above that. We need to choose as a country which direction we want to go in.

How do we protect our democracy? The people of the state have a voice and make sure their vote matters but will not be easy. How do we prevail? We need to remember we have the power. We need to communicate to our legislators. Legal protections guarantee that we can vote absentee. It will be a multi-year effort. Citizen redistricting committee will decide how to get equitable voting districts for fair representation. The committee is made up of 4 democrates, 4 republicans and 5 independents. Let your voice be heard. It's the people that make our democracy healthy.

Women can't get discouraged about taking a leadership role. Women can be great role models.