

Rotary



Club of Washington

Thursday, February 11, 2021

February 9, 2021

The Rotary Club of Washington met by Zoom

Present were: **Brad Montgomery, Tom Drewitz, Dave and Shirley Moore, Angeline East, Dave Hart, Mary Jo and Rich Podgurski, John Hopper, Andy Goudy, Ken Baker, Dorothy and John Tecklenburg, Bill and Susan Price, John Quayle, Tom Uram, Tom Northrop, Lars Lange, Carrie Richardson, Park Burroughs, Phil Rush, Joe Piszczor, Susan Priest,** and our speaker **Aaron Miller**

Pre-Meeting

Before the meeting we discussed the problem of snow shoveling for those of us who should not be shoveling. The **Moore**s lamented the days of young people coming to the door to offer to shovel for a fee. **Mary Jo Podgurski** pointed out that with remote learning, the kids don't get snow days, so are not free to practice entrepreneurship. **Susan Price** said that their driveway is about 165 feet, and no one ever offers to take that on. To which **Shirley Moore** responded that that was no driveway, it was a lane.

Mary Jo said that **Susan Price** would be pleased to learn that the young people at the center who are in the cooking club made bread from scratch last week, and this Thursday a teen who has to be gluten and dairy free is going to show how to make gluten-free and dairy-free pancakes.

Susan Price asked if the bread was made by the slow rise method, and **Mary Jo** said that it was not. **Susan** then shared an incident from her cooking class days. She had 5 classes, divided into 4 sections, and with only 40 minutes for classes she did cool rise with the dough in the refrigerator. One time the dough was to be used on a Friday, but that day turned out to be a snow day, so that when she went into the school on Monday the refrigerator was the scene of a major dough explosion.

Susan Price also said that she and **Bill** had spoken with **Erv and Paula Leppert** this past week, and Erv, who is the cook of the couple, was going to be making beer bread. **Susan** said that since they had a lot of beer in the fridge, and neither she or **Bill** drank beer, she was going to try making beer bread, too.

The subject of disposing of outdated medicine came up and **Dorothy Tecklenburg** said that most municipalities had a safe drop-off. **Susan Priest** said that she used the box at Washington and Jefferson College, which many present did not know about. It is located in the security office across from the Rossin Campus Center. She said that after her 2017 operation she was given a prescription for 40 oxycontin pills and only used one. The rest went to the drop-box. Someone said that she could have financed a nice trip, but she said it was not worth the risk, and someone else agreed that orange was not her color.

Kyanite Tecklenburg then made a determined effort to pursue a career as a voracious reader by attempting to eat the cover of a book next to **Dorothy Tecklenburg**. She is getting to be one huge puppy.

Susan Price said that a friend had a standard poodle and reported that a whisk was the perfect tool to remove snow balls from its hair. **Dorothy Tecklenburg** shared a story about her time in China when a Chinese guard asked why another foreigner in the compound had a sheep (it was a standard poodle). **Dorothy** could not convince him that in fact the sheep was a dog.

Dorothy Tecklenburg also apologized to the club for forgetting that she had offered to run a pool for the Super Bowl. She remembered as the kick-off was happening. **Bill Price** again lamented losing out on last year's pool during the last 30 seconds of the game. Someone remarked that **Bill** has gotten \$1000 worth of complaining out of it.

Mary Jo Podgurski was glad that somebody else was forgetful. She says she had chemo-brain and that **Rich** is her external memory system.

Rich Podgurski remarked that on driving through the campus one can see that the college is very strict about masks. Students were also asked to isolate before entering into social interaction. This meant that they had to order in food during isolation. **Joe Piszczor** said that this created a bad situation for the wrestlers, some of whom went a bit overboard in ordering in food.

Getting Started

President Brad then rang the bell and we began with an invocation by **Susan Priest**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. This week **Brad** had a picture of the flag from last Sunday's Super Bowl

Announcements:

The Family Essentials project is off to a great start. He has created 19 bags so far, and **Dave Hart**, who has enlisted neighbors, has brought in a ton of bags. There are about 60 to 70 bags already. **Susan Price** said she would create a letter on Rotary letterhead which she will share with us as a computer file so that we can tweak it for our contacts. She says that she hopes that **Brad** can display something in the window at Hicksons so that we can broaden the interest of the community in the project and increase participation. Brad said that with all the bags: ♦this place has never smelt better.♦

Susan Price said that there is a plan to have a cork pool for the District Conference, which we all hope will be held in a better situation than last year. They already have a donation of a \$300 bottle of wine for it. (If you remember, a cork pool lets persons pay to draw a cork, and the number on the cork corresponds to a bottle of wine.)

Program: Aaron Miller - The Dreamers Co.

President Brad then introduced **Aaron Miller**, executive director of The Dreamers Co. **Aaron** began by saying that this last year has presented obstacles and hurdles. He explained that hurdles are set at different distances depending on the length of the race. Runners program themselves to run a set number of strides, and then leap. On one occasion, the hurdles were mis-set, and partway through the race the distances between the hurdles changed. Runners were running their set pattern, jumping before the hurdle and then running into it. They had to adapt to what the changing conditions. This was true for the Dreamers.

The Dreamers Co. is an organization which is dedicated to community development and partners with many community and governmental agencies. Their mission statement calls for a passion for making renaissance a reality. They do not just want to catch up or keep up, but to transform. The focus is on three main areas.

- First is blight. This town has gone through several boom-and-bust cycles: gas and oil, glass, steel, and now gas and oil again. They work house by house to improve properties, concentrating on homes owned by the elderly, disabled, and veterans. They also target low-income owners, and help with renters, provided the landlord is on board. In the past six to seven years they have worked on over 100 properties: roofs, foundations, gutters, painting, and some plumbing. The aim is to put dignity back in people's lives.
- Second is Play Washington. During a period when they were working on several properties in the 700 block of Broad street, they were appalled by the state of the 8th Ward playground. Little or no equipment, and what was there was damaged, no lighting, the playground was not a safe place for children, and was locked about 80% of the time. Playgrounds are a vital part of the socialization of children. They are the places where children learn to connect with other people: hospitality, kindness, community with others who are not like you. They are places where children create memories. With all the difficulties facing the city of Washington, the playgrounds had become overlooked and ignored. Dreamers Co is working with the Parks and Playgrounds Committee of the city and have made improving playgrounds one of their core missions.
 - After the 8th Ward playground, they went on to the 7th Ward playground. They began to tackle the problems there, cleaning up the overgrowth, planning for more and safer equipment. They held a block party to make the residents stake holders in the project. They put up a large white board and asked people to add to lists in two categories: Dreams and Concerns. They saw real involvement, and interaction between parents from different races and backgrounds. They are raising funds for the needed upgrade and have raised \$55,000 of the needed \$70,000 to \$75,000 needed. The funds will be used for materials and equipment, the Dreamers will cover the labor. They have involved the local community, both adults and children, to set priorities, giving them input on which items are most wanted. They want this to be a space where the community can heal and connect. If members want to help they can go to <https://thedreamersco.churchcenter.com/giving/to/play-washington> to make a contribution.
- The third area is addressing the downtown. They want to help to beautify downtown Washington. They are working on ♦Art in the Alley♦, a project to put murals on the buildings on Pine Alley, next to the West Art Gallery. They have murals by three local women artists who donated their time and talents using community donated supplies. One of the murals is a lion's head, representing Aslan from the Narnia books. The Dreamers want to expand the mural project, but they need the approval of building owners. He praises the other art projects in the City, such as the Bradford House mural and the Farmers Market mosaic. They want to partner to expand the art.

During 2020 the Dreamers had to adapt to COVID. They did only outside work, protecting homeowners and workers from too close interaction. They are working on overgrown lots, cleaning them up and hoping to add the property to neighboring homes. They are aiming to do the work on the 7th Ward playground in late June or early July. In the fall they are aiming at having more art done in the downtown. They are doing preparatory work on a proposed Community Center across from Immaculate Conception Church, installing needed infrastructure: electricity, gas, water, etc.

He closed with these inspirational thoughts: Every good work begins with a dream. We are worthy of this goodness. The world needs help, hope, healing. Keep dreaming, don't lose hope.

Questions

- **Dorothy Tecklenburg** asked **Aaron** if he was familiar with **Pam Kilgore**, and her intention to work on the plantings in the downtown.
 - He is familiar with Pam and wants to work together with her.
- **Dorothy** also said that she is working with several others to get QR codes for the art and to develop an on-line guide to encourage snapchat users to visit Washington to get pictures of the art. They are working to locate the best places to stand to take pictures and to mark them for visitors.
 - He thinks this great and would like to be involved. Social media has a remarkable ability to draw people in.
- **Mary Jo Podgurski** said that she would love to work with **Aaron** on getting art on the facade of the building that houses the Teen Center. She would like to have an art contest for students from different schools to help design the art. She knows that this will need consent from the building owner.
 - **Aaron** said that several entities in the city are concerned in improving the building and that they are working on it.
- **Bill Price** spoke of **Fred and Karen Fleet**, who organized Mending Fences to work on improvements in the Highland-Ridge neighborhood. **Aaron** said that they had worked with the Fleets. During one summer about 70 volunteers worked with them.
 - Aaron said that the Dreamers plan many activities, such as City Cleanup Days. To find out what is happening or is being planned, persons can fill out an application to receive their newsletter: <https://thedreamersco.churchcenter.com/people/forms/147082>

- **Brad Montgomery** asked about the locations of the 8th and 7th Ward playgrounds.
 - **Aaron** said that the 8th Ward is in the West End, at 790 Broad Street, and the 7th is a few blocks from the high school at 400 Donnan Avenue. Brad said that he remembered visiting the 7th Ward playground many years ago with one of his daughters and thinking that it had so much potential.
- **John Tecklenburg** asked about the structure of The Dreamers Co. Is it a 501(c)3 corporation? How is it funded?
 - **Aaron:** The Dreamers is a 501(c)3 corporation, begun in 2013. It began as a local option for church youth groups looking for a mission trip. The teens labored alongside skilled adult workers. They still do this for a week every summer. They get about 80% of their volunteers from local churches, but they welcome all who want to make a difference. Funding comes from various fundraisers throughout the year. They participate every year in the WCCF Day of Giving, and they apply for grants. They partner with the Community Development Corporation, which provides materials while the Dreamers provide the labor. The corporation has no paid staff.

The meeting ended with the Four Way Test, led by **President Brad**.



Speakers

February 16th
Owen Standley
Appalachian Trail Project

February 23rd
Brad Montgomery
Club Assembly

Events

No Events found

Club Leaders

[David Bradley Montgomery](#)
President

[Brandi B. Miller](#)
President-Elect

[John P. Hopper](#)
Vice President
Vocational Service Chair

[Lars Lange](#)
Secretary

[Susan E. Priest](#)
Assistant Secretary

[Robert K. Wicker](#)
Assistant Treasurer

[David W. Moore](#)
Treasurer

[David A. Hart](#)
Rotary Foundation Chair

[William J. Mesler](#)
Membership Chair

[Diane L. Ambrose](#)
Club Service Chair

[Thomas C. Drewitz](#)
Webworker

[Angeline Anyango East](#)
Community Service Chair

[Dorothy Curley Tecklenburg](#)
International Service Chair

[Antonio Zuloaga](#)
Area Governor

Club Meeting

Washington
Meets at W & J College, The Commons
60 S. Lincoln St.
Washington, PA 15301
Time: Tuesday at 12:00 PM