

# Rotary



# Club of Washington

Friday, April 23, 2021

**April 20, 2021**

## The Rotary Club of Washington met by Zoom

Present were: **Brad Montgomery, Tom Drewitz, Dave and Shirley Moore, Brandi Miller, Dorothy and John Tecklenburg, Andy Goudy, Kathy Sabol, Angeline East, Mary Jo and Rich Podgurski, Ken Baker, John Quayle, Lars Lange, John Hopper, Lars Lange, Joe Piszczor, and Susan Priest.** Guest was our speaker, **Drew Manko from Ross Farm.**

### Pre-meeting

When Susan Priest entered she congratulated Angeline East on having used her treadmill enough over the years to have worn it out. Angeline had posted on Facebook that her treadmill had finally stopped working. Angeline said that she had had it for more than 10 years and she has already replaced it with a rowing machine.

Tom Drewitz said that he had heard of trouble with Peloton treadmills, citing a recent video of a baby being sucked under a moving treadmill. He offered to show the video, but received no offers. In fact, the child was not harmed, although, according to those who were not too cowardly to see it, the video apparently looks very scary.

At this point Mary Jo remarked that she had always said: ♦Exercise is Dangerous.♦ Dorothy Tecklenburg posted in the chat that the two most common exercise issues were: flying off the handle and jumping to conclusions. She used chat because a certain puppy was being quite talkative and she was muting herself and John.

Tom Drewitz said that usually people have trouble using treadmills because there were too many clothes hanging off them. Mary Jo shared that she once fell off a treadmill because she answered her phone when her son called. Rich Podgurski said that was because she used two hands to talk to her son, one to hold the phone and one to talk. (I understand that some people cannot talk if they do not use both hands, and are handicapped if they have to only use one while the other holds the phone.)

Brandi Miller joined us and said that the twins are now 4 months old and over 15 pounds. Because she and Shane are not busy enough, they have sold their current house and are closing on a new one in 30 days. Shane has just started his parental leave and is at present a stay-at-home dad. Shirley Moore asked if they have a rocking chair, since that had been a big help to her. Brandi said that she does have one, but prefers the recliner. The twins are growing like weeds.

Lars Lange greeted us by saying that it would take about twenty minutes to describe his crazy trip to Colorado, whetting our interest by telling us that thanks to YouTube he was able to change the clutch on his Volkswagen by himself. Sounds like an eventful journey.

### Getting Started

At this point, President Brad rang the bell and the meeting began. President Brad gave the invocation himself, and held up a photo of the flag at Wash Hi field for us to use in the Pledge of Allegiance. He said that he thought that it was appropriate, given how much time Drew Manko had spent there. President Brad, a 10-year band parent, fondly remembers Drew in the band.

### Foundation Luncheon

President Brad said that he, Kathy Sabol, and the Prices attended the Foundation Luncheon on Sunday. They shared a table with 4 other Rotarians. When it came time to learn who had won the various baskets, the Washington Rotarians had no luck, but all the others at the table werewinners. Several of the baskets at the luncheon included bottles of wine, and the Prices came away with several bottles for the cork pull at the District Conference when winners donated some of their good fortune to that worthy cause. President Brad continues to encourage members to make donations of bottles. Donations can be dropped off at Hicksons. At the luncheon the club was honored with an award for being one of the best clubs in the 2019-2020 year in raising money for Polio Plus, and he displayed the award to us.

### Discussion

- President Brad reminded us that the last meeting of this Rotary year will be on June 29th, and he hopes to have that be an outdoor meeting. A couple of members have offered to help organize this, but other volunteers are welcome. In fact, President Brad hopes we may have an in-person meeting in May, and looks forward to more during the warmer months. We all look forward to a time when we can meet together in person in the future.

President Brad then turned the meeting over to Angeline East to discuss this Saturday's City-wide Cleanup. Angeline in turn asked Joe Piszczor to fill us in. Joe said that the club will be cleaning from the Patriots Pavilion up Main Street and, if we still have any oomph left, along Chestnut as well. Any one in need of gear and bags can get them at the 8th Ward playground, or the Wash Hi parking lot, beginning at 8 AM. Mary Jo Podgurski had said that the youngsters from the Teen Center are looking forward to helping, although 8 is early for them. Joe said that they were welcome whenever they came, but Mary Jo said firmly that they were capable of getting up that early.

## Program: Drew Manko

President Brad then asked Susan Priest to introduce our speaker, Drew Manko. Susan said that we all know Drew, both from his previous talks to us, and because we all remember his mother, Amy Manko, who was a member of the club for many years. Drew began by telling us that his mother moved to Hudson, Ohio after the death of her husband, and is now a member of the Hudson Rotary Club.

Drew said that Susan had asked him if he could talk about the impact of the pandemic on farming. He said that the pandemic hit hard as much of his business was supplying restaurants. He was able to make up some of the business loss by expanding his retail sales. The pandemic has given people a new perspective on where their food comes from. As their regular stores developed shortages, people were driven to explore other local options.

The farm lost 50% of sales to the wholesale market, but got 20% of that back through expanded retail sales. The farm weathered the storm and is seeing the return of some restaurant sales, although some restaurants which closed are now gone for good. However, there are also some new restaurants. Wool took a hit as well. The festival trade was one major outlet for wool sales which disappeared, although some festivals are beginning to be scheduled. Amy has reopened her yarn store in Hudson.

At this point he had to take a brief call. He explained that he is involved with the government in work on expanding rural broadband access. The lack of broadband is a real challenge to the local farmers. In his case, he is only 500 yards away from a State Police barracks which has fiber optic access to the internet, but the provider is not interested in extending the lines. He has no internet on the farm and has to use his phone to gain access. For instance, he was Zooming with us using his phone. At present he is going to be involved in a trial of Starlink.

Joe Piszczor then broke in to ask Drew to share with us his involvement with the Farm Bureau, an organization which Joe has joined as a member, and which any of us can join.

Drew explained that the Farm Bureau is a grass roots lobbying organization which promotes actions which benefit owners of agricultural land. The organization is mostly county based and works on developing recommendations for government policies to promote and help the farming community. There is one registered lobbyist, and the rest are volunteers who work to consult with the government. Drew is the district chair of the young farmers (18-35) section. He started promoting this on Facebook in 2016 and is now in frequent touch with the state Secretary of Agriculture.

Joe Piszczor said that his hard work for the farming community is much appreciated.

Drew said that agriculture is the #1 industry in the state, after health care.

Mary Jo Podgurski said that she was very proud of Drew, who was awarded the Teen Outreach Alumni Achievement award in 2019. Drew joked that the person who accepted the plaque on his behalf has not gotten it him yet, and he (Drew) needed to get after him.

Drew said that he enjoys feeding people, and mentioned that he thinks that the Tecklenburgs had bought more lamb from him than anyone else. Dorothy Tecklenburg piped up to say that in fact they had had some last night, and offered anyone interested a great recipe for lamb chops.

Someone asked about bees. They had seen something about him being involved with bees at Washington Park. Drew admitted that he had donated a colony of bees, which is in an undisclosed location away from the public. There was concern about liability issues if too many people went bee hunting.

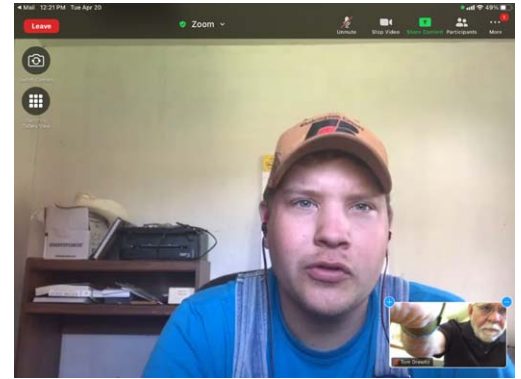
Bees are a very important part of agriculture. After he added bee hives to the farm he noticed a significant increase in crop yield. He is at capacity for hives now, so when he last saw a split in a hive he offered a hive to WashPA Outdoors and Pam Kilgore accepted. Dorothy Tecklenburg asked if he would be interested in using some of the Tecklenburg property for a hive. Drew was interested since he is at capacity right now. At some point a hive splits, bees leave with eggs and hatch a new queen. They swarm, and people like Drew can help with swarms, but in fact a swarm usually stays in one place for only about an hour, then moves on looking for the right place for a hive. Swarms are not aggressive.

Joe Piszczor asked about the biggest hurdles in farming, and what could we as individuals or an organization do to help.

Drew said that the biggest hurdle is the generation gap in farmers. The average age of an American farmer is 58. Less than 25% are under 35. This dates to the lean years for farming in the 70s and 80s. Agricultural prices were depressed. Young people saw their parents working one or two jobs to earn enough to keep the farm going, as well as putting in the hard work of farming. The youngsters went looking for other ways to make a living. Young farmers today grew up in the 90s, following grandparents around on the farm. Drew remembers trailing his grandfather, being allowed to run the tractor when he was 8.

This age gap also creates another hurdle. Old farmers can have a chip on their shoulder. The younger generation is doing new things, growing new kinds of crops, getting into selling directly to the consumer. The older farmers can be snippy and condescending. Drew said that he has a 3, 5, and 10-year business plan for the farm and is business-oriented.

As far as what we can do to help: Work together with the farming community to get hi-speed internet to rural areas. Patronize your local farmers market. Buy directly from the farmers. Eliminate as many middlemen as possible. Generally there are 3-5 layers between the farmer and the buyer, and every layer adds to the final cost. When we buy, the farmer will have made very little of what we spend. He cited Heritage Craft Butchers and the Wheeling Publix Market as places which put only one layer between the buyer and his meat. If you buy lamb from a Giant Eagle, there is a 70% chance that it came from Australia. Think about the waste of resources made getting



that meat to the United States. Buying locally benefits the farmer, and also the planet.

John Hopper said that he grew up as a summer farmer, his mother had been a farm girl. He said that, considering the two biggest industries in Pennsylvania, agriculture and health care, the more we have a strong and robust farming community, the less we will need health care. The use of middlemen serves to enrich investors and not producers.

Drew mentioned agricultural futures as an example, but says that the Farm Bureau encourages farmers to consider using futures to lock in prices.

Rich Podgurski asked if the pandemic led to maintenance or feed cost increases.

Drew said that this has not been an issue until the last few months. Grain prices have spiked. This stems from a wet harvest in Brazil. Being in the Southern Hemisphere, their harvest is 6 months off from ours. Because Brazil's harvest was poor, China is buying much more corn and soybeans from America. The more that is shipped to China, the less remains for feed, and farmers face price hikes.

Orders are up now, but so are equipment prices, since equipment needs chips which come from China.

Rich also asked if all components of farming were equally hurt.

Drew said that the worst hit is the weakest sector, dairy. Government subsidies are what keeps dairy farmers afloat. More and more smaller farms are being pushed to sell to larger operations. In the end, however, everybody has to eat.

John Tecklenburg asked about Washington County farms. Were they being forced out by big companies? What was the relationship between big and small?

Drew said that in Washington County there is only one big producer, Rivendale. They are mostly dairy, although they are branching out into poultry. In the state, large scale farms account for less than 1%, and in the United States less than 2%. For example, the largest dairy operation has 900 cows. They sell to Land o' Lakes, a cooperative, and much ends up at Hershey.

President Bard thanked Drew, noting that he has a passion for his profession and that we are in good hands.

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

## Speakers

April 27th  
[Brad Montgomery](#)  
Club Assembly

May 4th  
[Rea Andrew Redd](#)  
Abandoned Tracks: The Underground  
Railroad in Washington County

May 11th  
[Betsy West](#)  
Main Street Farmers Market

May 18th  
[Club Members](#)  
Memories of Mothers

## 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](#)  
Assistant Governor

## Club Meeting

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