

Rotary



Club of Gaithersburg

October 23rd, 2022

Club Meeting

Meets at La Villa Restaurant
[18701 North Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20879](#)
Time: Tuesdays at 12:15 PM

Also on Zoom. For logon
information, write to
gaithersurgrotaryclub@gmail.com

Club Leaders

Margaret Young
President

Nia English
Secretary

Dan Dellon
Treasurer

Sara Torrence
Club Foundation Chair
- Dan King, Vice-Chair
- Bob Bokma, Secretary
- Diana Swanson, Treasurer
- Nancy Scull, Member-at-Large

Janet Greiner
iPast President

Frederick W. Cooksey
Sergeant-at-Arms

Kenneth D. Weiss
Area Governor

Events

October 25th, luncheon meeting
Subject: Polio Awareness
Speaker: TBS

October 27th
**Rockville Rotary Charter
Night** in Botanero. For info.,
write to
rotariangarciaparks@gmail.com

November 1st
Club Assembly.

November 8th
Secret Washington DC
Speaker: JoAnn Hill
Subject: Author JoAnn Hill will
talk about her book "Secret
Washington DC: A guide to the
weird, wonderful and obscure".

November 15th
Cruise travel
Speaker: Apollo Bala Travel
Advisor

November 19th
Charter Night.

Our Meeting Last Tuesday

By Kenneth D. Weiss on Saturday, October 22, 2022



A good group last Tuesday, in-person and online. We had a visiting Rotarian, **Archana Uppal** from the Metro Bethesda Rotary. She wanted to hear our guest speaker. After the opening ceremonies, President Margaret announced upcoming events, and then the speaker took over. His presentation was shocking - a clear call to action. See the story that follows.

After the presentation, Margaret described other **upcoming events**, including a stream clean-up and distribution of food. T.O. invited us all to an International Food Fest on October 22nd. Note: Ken and Bea attended and greatly enjoyed it. \$20 bought two good lunches and food to take home.

Then, nearly everyone offered **happy dollars** for the speaker and other purposes. Ken said his body had been broken but he had managed to replace it for only \$160. It turned out that he meant his **camera** body. Janet thanked the members who had helped weed our butterfly garden. That is **important** work.

Trafficking! It is horrible!

Matt Friedman is dedicated to making a dent in human trafficking. Now traveling in the U.S., he is giving about two speeches a day for 36 days. Our club was one of the venues. He works through an organization in Hong Kong that he founded in 2015 - the **Mekong Club**, but has worked on trafficking issues since long before that.

Matt started discussing **sex trafficking** and described in detail how young girls get pulled into it. He has talked with hundreds and is extremely frustrated that he can't save them all. Then, he described how young men get **roped into** going out on **fishing boats**, for a few weeks, and are stuck at sea for **four years**. If a young man can not or will not keep working, he is simply thrown overboard.

Matt's next example was even more horrific. Children as young as 2 are forced to ride in **camel races**. When they are about 5, they become too heavy to

The Rotary Four-way Test

Of all that we think, say and do:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendship?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?



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win and are simply dumped on the street.

About **50 million people** are in modern slavery, said our speaker, 62% of those in prostitution. A new one is recruited or kidnapped **every 4 seconds**. With COVID, the number shot up because many factories closed. Many of the forced labor cases are in the **supply chains** for chocolate, apparel, and other products. **India** is by far the worst for trafficking, followed by China, but no country is exempt. He estimated about **700,000 victims** in the U.S. at present.

Governments do not like human trafficking but are largely powerless to stop it, so most of the work is done by NGOs. Human trafficking generates about **\$150 billion** per year in profits, with only \$350 million available to fight it. As a result, few victims are saved and few criminals are jailed. There is, however, some legislation now that helps make lawsuits possible. At least partly to avoid embarrassment, many companies fill out **ESG** (Environmental, Social, Governance) forms about their controls on purchasing. The Mekong Club does a lot of training for such companies, and many of them are its members.

Everyone can help, Matt said. Be vigilant. Watch for suspicious activity, be a responsible consumer, volunteer and raise funds for organizations that combat trafficking. He has written four books, which are available on Amazon.com, and there is more information at <https://themekonggroup.org>.

