



the SPLINTER

CLUB 470 * DISTRICT 5160 * ORGANIZED APRIL 29, 1926
www.rotary5160.org

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2018
www.woodlandrotary.org



Today's Meeting Mahlon led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Rotary Gracers led us in grace, with wonderful harmony.

Visiting Rotarians/Guests

Sylvia Fitzgerald was visiting from Sacramento.



Brad Miller joined us from the Woodland Sunrise club.



Kevin Hoppin from Wraith, Scarlett, Randolph was visiting with Dillon.

Paul Harris award Tom Schwarzgruber presented Dillon Dougherty with his Paul Harris award.

Announcements Gary Wegener did Meals on Wheels. Roger did the setup; President Mike said he helped a little.

President Mike said he was continuing past-President Peter's habit of recognizing a member each week to tell the club a little about themselves, with a "This is Your Life" moment. He asked Dick Hoppin to tell the club a little about himself. Dick said he's retired. "You have an education in law?", Mike asked. Dick admitted he did. He was born in Oakland, but raised in Woodland. His family has been in Woodland since 1849. He wasn't sure how long he has been in Rotary. He was in for 10-15 years, then took a break. Dick said he had invited Gary Wirth to be a member, and it was Gary who invited Dick to return to Rotary.





Membership chair Jennifer Ward encouraged members to focus on bringing in new members. Jennifer said, “If we’re not growing, we’re dying.” She said we want to build the club up, not just with business owners who want to network, but also with spouses or kids who want to further Rotary’s work. In August and September the club is having a membership drive. A prospective member eats free. They can come a second time and eat for free if they’re likely interested in membership. The person who brings them will get some free raffle tickets.

The District is raising money for the Redding fire victims. The endowment will match what’s raised at today’s meeting and next week’s meeting. Checks should be made to the Rotary Endowment. A member asked whether the Endowment would match contributions already made directly; the answer was yes. Someone asked whether there was any limit on the amount of matching. President Mike said, no, “The Endowment has \$585” [a comment which followed Mike throughout the meeting whenever money was mentioned.]



Birthdays and Anniversaries Birthdays and anniversaries were skipped, as the list didn’t show any.



Recognition Gary Bunch led recognition. He said it was the second time he had been up there recently. He asked whether there was someone who wanted to be fine-free for a month. He said that George Berrettoni and Roger Dorris were no longer available, so he needed a couple of volunteers. Tony Delevati volunteered. After first trying to volunteer Tom Schwarzgruber, Tabb also volunteered, saying “I have so many people to get even with.”

Dillon was asked whether he came just to receive his Paul Harris award. He was charged \$20 to tell the club what’s been happening in his life the last three months. His first response was “work and kids”, but he acknowledged he was able to get away for a week in Tahoe around July 4, and a couple more weekends.



Frank Gardner said he just turned 94. For his “first birthday day” they went to San Francisco. They couldn’t quite get up to the top of Coit Tower, but they enjoyed a brunch on Nob Hill with lobster and quail “and then got started on lunch.” He got free drinks for his birthday, and a special bottle for the military. (He was asked whether he had to be carried out.) Frank said he’s been in Rotary for 62 years. He said there would have been two more, but someone blackballed him for two years. He contributed \$100, all in one-dollar bills, to the Foundation to launch President Mike’s new year.

Dan Stroski was happy that they’re going to pick up a new foreign exchange student, from China, on Sunday. The student will be here for nine months.



Kevin Haarberg just got back from a trip to see the Norwegian fiords. He was asked whether they slept, due to the almost-24-hour days. He said they partied all day long. On July 27, they celebrated their 22nd anniversary.

Tony D. had a happy and a sad time. He said his daughter is getting married in two weeks. But his father-in-law is in the hospital, and it doesn't look like he's going to make it.

Gary Bunch asked about the idea of having spouses in Rotary. "Who would want a spouse here; that would spoil the fun?"



Rags to Riches Visitor Sylvia Fitzgerald won a free lunch. We hope she'll be back to redeem it.



Today's Program

Nick Roncoronni introduced our guest, Dr. John Purcell. Dr. Purcell has spent over 30 years helping farmers grow food using less resources. Dr. Purcell is currently Vice President, Distinguished Fellow, and Global Vegetable R&D Lead at Monsanto. Prior to joining Monsanto, Dr. Purcell was a post-doctoral research at the US Department of Agriculture, focusing on insect biochemistry. Dr. Purcell's love for agriculture extends to his personal life, where he owns a hog ranching operation in Montana with his brother.

Dr. Purcell said he feels fortunate to have spent a lifetime in agriculture. He said our ability to produce food is amazing. He said that as a member of the United Way board, he has always admired Rotary for its service to the community. He said that Monsanto also focuses on giving to the community in both time and money.



Dr. Purcell said he has spent the last ten years in the vegetable business. He said that they don't only work in the seed business; they also work on the farm. He said that today's customers are very picky. They want their food to be local, to taste good, to look good, and to have minimal or no pesticides.

His brother runs their hog farm on a daily basis, working 12-hour days. The farm is family-owned, small, and local. But Dr. Purcell said we also need the big growers who can put porkchops in every grocery store in the country. That economy of scale is what allows U.S. consumers to pay the lowest percentage of our income for food of any country in the world.

One hundred years ago, 40% of the population were farmers, now only 1.5% of our population feeds the rest of us.

Dr. Purcell said there was a shockwave in the production industry a few years ago when Amazon bought Whole Foods. Stores like Whole Foods put more emphasis on taste. He asked, “Why is the produce department the first department you see in almost every grocery store?” Because it’s a sensory experience. For e-retailers, the biggest nightmare is not meeting those expectations of produce which looks and tastes good.

Dr. Purcell discussed the new sales. Now there’s an app that allows someone to come into your house and put the groceries in the refrigerator! He said people like convenience, and they like small (baby carrots, little peppers..).

The biggest challenge for agriculture now is labor. Vegetable farmers, with their lower margins, are competing with wineries, berry growers, and cannabis growers for labor. Not only is labor more expensive, but it can be completely unavailable. Even in Mexico, farm labor is hard to get. Workers would rather work in an air-conditioned factory than outside in the hot sun.

Dr. Purcell said technology will be a great way to solve some of these issues. The ability to use automation and robotics is crucial. He said lots of dot.com companies are interested in agriculture, but they “don’t have muddy boots.” (They don’t actually spend time on farms).

Dr. Purcell said that as a seed company, Monsanto is focusing on genetics. He said that years ago, processing tomatoes didn’t look like they do now. He said they worked on getting smaller fruit, changing how the fruit attached to the plant for easier harvest, and uniform ripening. They developed “high-rise broccoli”, which has uniform ripening and can be harvested mechanically.

He said there have been huge advances in digital operations. “This is not your grandpa’s farm.” Remote sensing and drones can let the farmer know if there’s disease, and where. That can create huge monetary and environmental savings, by allowing spraying of only the diseased area.

Steve asked who owned Monsanto now? Dr. Purcell said Bayer will, when all the steps of the buy-out are completed. For now, they’re being operated as separate companies. Bayer has to divest some of its operations before the takeover will be approved.

Dr. Purcell was asked about GMO crops. He said that vegetables are still generally developed by old-fashioned breeding, except for corn. He said it costs about \$30 million to get a GMO seed through the regulatory process, so it’s only done for high-volume crops like grains. He said it’s not only the US using GMO’s – it’s all the big grain producers like Brazil and Argentina.

He said indoor farms are very viable. He said there are some incredible glass-house operations now. Indoor farming takes away a lot of the environmental risk, and puts the growing closer to where the consumers are. The costs of the buildings, though, is huge.