



## **THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE**

### **Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley**

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) [www.rotary5470.org](http://www.rotary5470.org) [www.paoniarotary.org](http://www.paoniarotary.org)

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

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LAST MEETING: October 26, 2017

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Karri Polson won the football pool and donated her winnings to the scholarship fund.

November 30 will be a regular meeting instead of the usual 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday.

Nov. 3 is the next highway cleanup. Meet at the storage sheds at mm 6 on highway 133 at 9 am.

Dictionaries will likely be available for distribution within the next two weeks.

Remember to feed the polio jar. Also, pay your dues.

**PROGRAM:** Lisa Delaney introduced Steve Smith, who enlightened us about Media for Development International. Smith spends half time in Paonia, one quarter time on his ranch near the Black Canyon, and the rest of his time traveling. He started his multi-faceted career with a masters degree in public health and communication with a project in Bangladesh; he help find funding for clinics around Southeast Asia; then through Johns Hopkins University he became involved with family planning in Nigeria.

Smith then went into the computer business, selling and repairing Toshiba equipment. With sufficient funds in hand, he established Media Development International, a 501(c)(3) organization that produces "message" films. For twenty years, he and a partner worked in Zimbabwe producing films on women's rights, teen pregnancy and the like. When the economy in that country collapsed, they moved their operation to Tanzania. They were the pioneers in the business of commercial filming focused on social issues. Producing these films in Swahili beginning in the 1980s was unheard of.

Funding for Smith's projects has come primarily from the US government. With that source of support drying up, they are now receiving aid from the Swiss government, which requires a lot less project oversight than US aid.

The organization is currently producing a film that shows when women are involved in decision making in agriculture, the result is more food. Next up is the "Integrity Project", an anti-corruption film that will be followed by a TV and radio series. To date they have done 7 feature films and 12 shorter pieces. A number have been concerned with AIDS. Some have changed behavior such as creating widows' rights and encouraging young people to move back to their home village and successfully engage in modern agriculture.

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL:** [Las week's story: Humanitarian Rick Burns, a retired civil affairs officer in the U.S. Army, has been helping people in the war-torn countries of Afghanistan and Iraq since 2003. He started his nonprofit, Karadah Project International to help make permanent, projects started

with good intentions but no follow up.]

[Along with other non-profits Burns] approached his Rotary club, which donated \$1,000 to his nonprofit. The money was given to the Shindand Women Social Foundation (SWSF), Burns' Afghanistan partner, to help purchase two goats each for 15 women (total cost \$10,000). The goats not only provide food for the women's families, they also provide an income. The women sell the goats' milk in the village. The SWSF also purchased 10 goats for breeding, to ensure the project's sustainability.

Like Heifer International, each family is required to donate the first offspring of their donated animal to another needy family, giving even more families the chance at a better life. In fact, Burns first approached Heifer International for help with this project but was told they didn't work in Iraq and Afghanistan. So he found a local group, the Shindand Women Social Foundation, who could adapt Heifer's model to fit their needs. The SWSF works with village leaders to determine which families receive the goats. It also purchases milk processing equipment locally and hires men in the village to train the women in milk production, further helping the local economy to recover.

As a soldier, Burns saw the success of projects measured solely on the amount of money spent and number of projects completed. "Those are very poor metrics," he says. "I try to do things intentionally and perhaps slower than other organizations so we can get it right."

Burns started by building upon the relationships he had developed while based in Iraq. In 2008 he established a friendship partnership between the Karadah (Baghdad) District Council and Council Bluffs, Iowa, through Sister Cities International.

He later formed a partnership between the University of Baghdad College of Dentistry and Creighton University School of Dentistry in Nebraska. With the help of the sister city committee, a delegation of professors from the Baghdad school visited the Creighton campus. Burns hopes to take advantage of a vocational training team through Rotary to further the mentoring relationship.

And then came the goats, a project so successful that a second group of 15 families is set to receive the animals. Burns worked through friends he'd made while on duty in Afghanistan to find the right partners and community support before launching the project. To ensure its ongoing success, he's put a priority on maintaining accountability and obtaining data through photographs, reports, and observation. But it's not always easy. "Everything we do (in Afghanistan and Iraq) is fraught with risk," says Burns. "But by being intentional and focused on the outcomes -- and not just simply spending money because we have it and it's easy -- we can make a difference in the lives of these amazing people."

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Nov. 2 - Steve Morris, West Elk Mountain Rescue

Nov. 9 - Chris Jacobson, Paonia Bread Works

Nov. 16 - Kristin Lynch, Western, Colorado Community Foundation

Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving (no meeting)

Nov. 30 -

Dec. 7 - Jay Bagley and Julie Bennett, Rubicon Roasting and Root and Vine

