



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: www.rotary.org www.rotary5470.org www.paoniarotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180

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LAST MEETING: March 17, 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS: James was elected PEN unanimously with a great, big cheer!

Betsy will host the Fifth Thursday social to be held on Thursday, March 31.

Felix reminded club members they could support this year's scholarship fund with some donations. "As this is St. Paddy's day, remember that the back side of our paper money is green," he said.

Bob's weekly update: Interior painting of his new house is done. Now the outside decks are being finished.

Congratulations to Joy on her very recent marriage to Rich Lax!

Vivian Cheney, sitting in for Frankye Wist, accompanied our singing "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" with gusto, and ended with a flourish to applause.

PE Gregg T. reported on PETS. "I feel very positive about Rotary. We are doing good in the world." While he got a lot out of the training seminar, he focused on what he learned about efforts to eliminate polio. "We need to keep donating to this effort. It will probably take \$1.5 billion to reach the finish line." There were 350,000 cases of polio worldwide in 1988. So far in 2016 there have been 7 cases in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since Rotary-led polio vaccinations started in the Phillipines in 1979, RI has spent \$1.2 billion of the \$12.2 billion spent overall to eradicate this disease. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has made significant contributions to this cause. One of the speakers at PETS was an older polio survivor. He is now showing symptoms of the disease again and wears braces.

The Board will be drafting a strategic plan for the club.

PROGRAM: Randy introduced Steve Lyons of Paonia who talked about "Green Burials". The principles of green burial are: 1) bury the body so it can decompose and return to a natural cycle - it turns to compost and supports new life; 2) be respectful of natural resources, using a few as possible; and 3) leave the burial site as natural as possible. 2.5 million people in the US die each year. Our current burial practices involve embalming, a casket, and a cement vault with a cement top. The body cannot decompose. Conventional burials use a lot of resources: 30 million board feet of hard wood go to caskets, which is 4,000 acres of forest. Tons of copper and bronze are also used in caskets. The tons of re-enforced concrete used in vaults would pave a sidewalk from Earth to the moon 28 times. Cemeteries prefer concrete lids to keep the ground over the grave site even. The amount of embalming fluid used would fill 2.5 olympic size swimming pools. It is carcinogenic, which leads to more than the average rate of deaths from cancer among people who work with the fluid. By way of contrast, green burials use

cardboard, wicker, paper mache or other such materials for coffins. The most intriguing may be a pod with a seed placed on top that the decomposing body nourishes into a tree.

Steve described in detail a recent green burial near Paonia. While Delta County is easy to deal with concerning such burials, there are some steps that must be taken. 1) Get a death certificate from the County Clerk and have the attending physician and coroner sign it. 2) Get a burial permit. 3) Transport the body to the burial site. (In this case, the body was at St. Mary's Hospital. The physician there had never delivered a body to individuals previously.) 4) The deceased's family and friends wrapped the body in a blanket and put dry ice under it. 5) They hand dug a grave. 6) They held a memorial for him. 7) They placed pine boughs in the bottom of the grave and put his body on top of them. 8) People took turns shoveling dirt into the grave. 9) They put a piece of sculpture the deceased had been working on as a marker on the grave. 10) Get a private burial affidavit that records the GPS location of the site and is attached to the property deed. It is filed with the County.

A lot of counties do not allow green burial. It is legal in the unincorporated areas of Delta County. However, it is not a widespread practice yet. Other ways of disposing of a body are acceptable here, just so long as they do not pose a health hazard. However, if burying the body, needs to be done within 5 days of death.

Other ways to deal with bodies include cremation, which though less costly than casket burial, and better from a resource use point of view, still has some negative environmental impact. One of our older members noted that medical schools need bodies to work on. In a final note, the average funeral in this country costs \$8000 - \$10,000, while a cardboard coffin from Amazon costs \$205.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL: Thinking back on Gregg's PETS report about polio made me ask the question, "If there are so few cases of polio occurring in just 2 countries, why will it cost \$1.5 billion to eradicate the disease?" At least part of the answer is there need to be massive immunization efforts in those two countries for a bit longer to ensure the virus simply has no place to go. There also need to be massive immunization efforts where unvaccinated children may be exposed to polio, which is brought into their country by people traveling from infected areas. When we say, "we are this close" to eliminating polio, it means the number of newly infected people is getting closer to 0. But we must not stop our efforts until all children are vaccinated. Therefore, fill our polio eradication jar. Make donations to The Rotary Foundation and ask they be put toward polio eradication. It will happen in our lifetime, but only if we keep after it. --SGB

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

March 24: Dave Noe, geologist, "The Story Behind the Scenery"

March 31: Fifth Thursday

April 7: Brad Harding, DCED - economic development

April 14: Dr. Jerry Nelson, on "Climate Change and Food Security"

