



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 - Chartered 12/20/22

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Co-edited by Karri Polson and Bain Weinberger

LAST MEETING: July 19, 2018

President Heck presided.

American the Beautiful was croaked out by the membership.

Mike set up the tables and chairs with assistance from Felix.

No Glenn, no Don's cards.

No Vising Rotarians.

Sarah's Key Guest was Karla Tschoepe. The key was passed to Stephan, as SEI member.

Announcements:

- Sarah announced that the Ducky Derby sign-up poster is now available. Members were encouraged to fill the slots.

New Member Induction: John VanDenBerg

As his sponsor, Sarah introduced newest member John VanDenBerg (and wore her hat for the occasion).

John's nickname is Big John. He is a Child Psychologist. Rotary is about being part of the community and he "loves fundraising". He is a big help for Citizens for a Healthy Community. He and his wife, Janine have 3 adult children. His grandparents moved to Crawford in 1907. John is involved in Open Table, which he presented to Rotary a while back. Sarah presented John with a temporary badge, membership pin and a membership certificate. President Heck and Rotarians at the meeting welcomed John via a receiving line.

John then spoke and said that he's never been a member of any service club before, but he Googled Rotary and was impressed with the mission of the organization, as well as with the club membership during two guest visits. John believes "no job is too mundane or basic".

Program: Farm Runner's Station

Sarah introduced the speaker, Emma Stopher-Griffin. Together with her husband Matt, they run the Farm Runner's Station in Hotchkiss. They are also a vendor coordinator for Mountain Harvest Festival. Their motto is: "Local Farms First".

Emma and Matt moved here in 2012 on an internship and worked on a local farm, but the income was not insufficient. They loved the valley and went looking for niche and may have found it. They started the Farm

Runners distribution business in June, 2014, to help local farmers get products to market. There is lots of power behind small, regional/local foods. A local non-profit in Crested Butte was having financial problems and gave a mini-van to Farm Runners. The next summer they bought a refrigerated box truck (that broke down constantly).

Four years later their business has grown exponentially—they're trying to hang on. They've added Matt's sister Katie from Steamboat and have 5 other new employees besides. They now have 2 trucks and lease a semi-truck during high season. Because they needed a large walk-in refrigerator they moved their business into the old Gopher gas station in Hotchkiss in April, 2018. There's been an amazing response from the whole community. People were constantly stopping in to ask what is going on, and they started selling food "out the back door". Last Fall they opened the actual store and in June they opened the grocery store for retail sales. Most all of the products are local. They even have locally produced ice cream. The business is going gangbusters. They've had 100 people through the store in one day.

The main business is still distribution—working with 50-60 farmers, who all want something different and need something different. They also work with 100-200 chefs who have their own set of needs; high-end restaurants, grocery stores, hospitals and schools. Emma and Matt are still learning what they want.

In the spring the chefs are invited to visit local farms and meet the farmers. Aspen Tea Company is one of their larger customers. Farm Runners works in Roaring Fork and Crested Butte and are hoping to extend to Vail and Telluride.

They need more farmers and more produce. Produce in this easy-to-sell community goes quickly because the quality is so high. The best seller by volume and financially is the local fruit. Salad greens are also a good seller. They have a 30% markup on fruit and vegetables, and a 15-20% markup on meat.

Chefs are aware of threat to local food quality from nearby oil and gas extraction. This is being used as leverage to help influence policy. A promotional video could help spread the word of Farm Runners and the quality of the produce in the valley. It is such a positive story.

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

July 26: Larry Wilkening, the new mayor of Hotchkiss



**ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**

