



Rotary



THE ROTARY CLUB OF NORTH VANCOUVER WHEEL SQUEALS

March 17, 2014

Written by Bob Malcolm

Desk: Joy Jones greeted those members and guests attending.

O Canada: President Deborah Sommerfeld led us in O Canada.

Invocation: Bob McKilligan gave the invocation.

Guests: We had three guests, our speaker, Susan Bibbings, her guest, Chantale Caurtemarche, and Paul Cameron, a prospective member.

Announcements: President Deborah led the announcements, including:

- John Stuart reported on the mentorship workshop he attended and the membership retention programs discussed.
- The Lions Gate club is having its annual Ladies Fashion Show on May 8 with the proceeds allocated for its Bali project.
- The District Conference in Squamish is close. Joy Jones will have her registration fee paid by the club in honour of her good work in India.
- Norm Binion advised of the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce trade show on Wednesday, March 12.

Sergeant-At-Arms: Michael Schelhaas did this duty. In the ticket draw David Spears drew the winning ticket, but sadly drew the Deuce of Spades.

Happy and Sads: Michael solicited many dollars with humour. Unusual for him, Michael contributed handsomely as he was in a very happy mood.



Presentation:

Our guest speaker, Susan Bibbings was introduced by President Deborah. Susan explained how Chantale has helped her this evening and ongoing. Their firm, Lotusland Imports, distributes jewelry hand crafted in Tanzania by Masai artisans.

Susan's message is that the aid model for Africa, designed at a conference held in July 1944, has created an entrenched culture of aid with governments tied to aid grantors, not citizens. Today, 70% of Africans exist on \$1 per day (up from 10 cents in 1944). An attitude shift from a pity model to a business model has started, but results will take a long period to be significant. Change will be



in increments, such as her achievements in Tanzania. Susan graphically showed how the current atmosphere in Africa came to this state.

Over 10 years ago, Susan visited her friends who were on a mission in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania in an area populated by Masai villagers. There was major illiteracy and minimal electrical service. This is still the situation in much of Africa. This experience was the impetus for Susan's projects.

First, Susan started the Big Dream Montessori Project. With her friends, Susan raised the initial capital to build a school based on the Montessori model. The building included solar panels to serve it. The surplus power is used to charge batteries. The school includes a kiosk micro business, loaning batteries to villagers, which are returned every two weeks for recharging for a small fee. The funds raised subsidize the school. This project energized the village in many ways, enhancing the lives of children and their families.

Second, Susan was attracted by the jewelry the women of the village created and wore. This jewelry is too big for sale in the markets of North America and Europe. Susan has a connection in Milan who designs jewelry. Using the Masai jewelry as a starting point, the Milan designer produces patterns for the Masai women to make for sale outside their village. Lotusland Imports was created to distribute this jewelry from Vancouver. Initially, 6 artisans made the jewelry. Now, 200 are employed.

The local people in Tanzania have minimal business training. Susan has a Swiss national overseeing the Tanzania part of the business, and a Swiss nun administering the school. It is her hope that, with education and training, more locals can do these functions. Time is needed and it may be slow.

Susan and Chantale wore some of the jewelry and provided a display of other pieces. Her talk was fascinating. Susan answered questions about each area of her presentation. Susan and Chantale stayed for individual questions.

Thanks: Michael Schelhaas thanked Susan and presented her with a PolioPlus certificate.



Toast to Rotary International: President Deborah led the group in toasting Rotary International.

The 4-Way Test: President Deborah led the group in The 4-Way Test:

Of the things we think, say or do:

Is it the TRUTH?

Is it FAIR to all concerned?

Will it build GOODWILL and better FRIENDSHIPS?

Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Hearing nothing more for the good of Rotary, President Deborah adjourned the meeting.

Future Meetings / Key Dates:

- Mar 17 St. Patrick's Day Dinner, An Evening of Irish Fellowship with the Eire Born Irish Dancers
- Mar 24 Women's Recovery House on the North Shore - Brenda Plant, Turning Point Recovery Society
- Mar 31 Relay for Life - Maureen Turner, Canadian Cancer Society
- Apr 7 Employment Development for the Homeless - Brenton Walters, Employment Development Coordinator, Lookout Emergency Aid Society
- Apr 14 Self Development, Happiness and Reducing Stress - Linzi Martin, Simplify Life
- Apr 21 No Meeting - Easter Monday Holiday
- Apr 28 Fellowship Evening - Covenant House Thank-a-Thon (5:30 to 8:00 pm)
- May 5 Peer2Pear Student Presentations - David Steverding, Vancouver Police Department

