

Erepartee



SERVICE Above Self

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<http://urbana.rotary6490.org/> Club # 3294

For July 24, 2007

Upcoming Program...

July 31 General Donald Lynn on "The Lincoln's Challenge Program"

Thought for the Day: Loren Bode gave us some inspirational (and often funny) thoughts on the dog days of summer

Guests: Bob Bender welcomed our guests at the door and at the podium. Go BOB!

Announcements:

Dan Perrino said as we were lacking in a little culture, he had two excellent suggestions:

Oct. 5 - Rotary outing at Parkland College to see: *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (which premieres Sept. 18).

Nov. 9 - Rotary outing at Krannert to see the opera - La Boheme.

Anna Merritt provided flyers reminding us of the blood drive. Please donate by July 31.

President Deb Rugg said the list of club committees was included in the last eRepartee and that if anyone had questions, they should feel free to ask.

Jon Liebman informs that the club's website is out of date while Brendan McGinty's firm (which hosts the site) changes servers. The site will be updated as soon as the changeover is complete.

Music: Willie Summerville led us in Battle Hymn of the Republic and Home on the Range.

Guests: Penn Nelson from C-U Sunrise

Members with Guests: Ray Elliott hosted Brian Watson (with AG Edwards), but he said the best thing about Brian was the fact that he was a former Marine.

Make-ups: Steve Shoemaker visited Rotary in Turkey and Israel on his recent trip to the Mideast.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Tom Berns asked for good news on this lazy, summer day.

Vickie Mayes reminded us to see Honk at Parkland College, and that they were temporarily rolling back admission to 1933 fees and we (and other citizens) could all go swimming at Crystal Lake for 15 cents! Now that's a bargain—if only I swam.

Howie said we had a Judas in our club, and he had kept Howie playing golf all day Saturday while his wife, Joyce and 40 U of I friends prepared an 80th birthday party for him. He happily acknowledged the Judas—Carl Larson— and added \$80 to the shoe. Carl contributed some, too, in honor of Howie.

Marilyn Kay was excited, saying she was able, through the magic of technology, to hear her nephew play Haydn's compositions in Germany.

Tom Conry thanks all those who helped him plan the great Rotary programs over the past year.

Doris Wenzel put a little something in the shoe because her granddaughter, Samantha, will be taking a pre-engineering course at Paxton High School this coming year.

Program: Steve Shoemaker shared information from his recent trip to Turkey, Israel and Palestine.

Tom Conry introduced Steve, saying he could not refuse as Steve sponsored him in Urbana Rotary 25 years ago.

Steve is a minister and has served in many capacities. At present he is in charge of the U of I YMCA.

Steve began modestly: "Our trip was only three weeks total, so I know very little actually." He told us, though, what he had observed during that visit.

He and his wife had been asked by a Turkish graduate student and his wife to make the trip, with about a dozen others, for an organization that was established to promote understanding with other cultures. He said, start to finish, the people of all three countries were unbelievably hospitable.

The countries are different. Turkey is large, 1000 miles east to west, and 300 miles north to south. Seventy-one million people live there—ten million in Istanbul—28% secular Muslims, and the government, newly elected, is a secular body. Turkey is a key E/W water route, and has, for centuries, been an international marketplace. You can trace the history of Turkey in 600-year segments, and in religion it has been "a wild thing" reflecting the many ruling empires seen over its long history. The first town, for instance, was on the map in 7500 BC.

Steve said one of the most interesting aspects of Turkey is how artifacts are used and reused over time, and not at all for the same purpose. Tourists have always been important in Turkey, but over the past ten years, and especially after 9-11, tourism has diminished as many now equate Muslims with terrorists. Rotaries are a big part of Turkey today. There are 68 clubs in Istanbul, alone. "Rotary is exploding, there...and is working for better peace and understanding.....and established 24 new clubs in 2000."

Israel, unlike Turkey, is a very small country (about the size of New Jersey) and is just 200 miles north to south (from Champaign to Cairo) and no more than 50 miles east to west (Decatur to Indiana border)—and part of this is the disputed area, though governed by Israel. "The geography of this area is very important to understand, as is its history.....Seven million people live there. 81% are Jewish, 16% are Muslims, 2% are of Christians, and 2% are Druzes."

"My wife and I stayed on the West Bank with a Lutheran pastor who was teaching music in a boys' home outside of Bethlehem. The boys were Arab." This is understandable as the West Bank, so often referred to in international news, is actually on the east side of Israel, close to the Palestine border.

Palestine is very small, too, and unlike Turkey and Israel, is very, very poor. There are no jobs and much of the population has had to reestablish themselves in other countries. "We had dinner in a Palestinian home. Our hosts, too, were terribly poor, but were, as were all those we met in the Mideast, very hospitable."

There were questions for Steve and his answers, reminding us they were from a narrow experience, were candid.

"The wall is dramatic and unfortunate. The Israelis say it is necessary for security; the Palestinians say it is a further grab for land....and nearly everyone we met was in dismay over the Iraq war. Israelis see it as necessary. Palestinians see it as unnecessary."

"We felt safe, but while in Israeli and Palestine, we made three major trips: to Haifa, the Dead Sea and to Jerusalem. Coming out of Jericho, an Arab town, we came to an Israeli checkpoint where the car died. As this could have been a sign it was a car bomb, the armed guards immediately descended on us, weapons drawn. It was a frightful moment."

Still, Steve said the trip was wonderful. "I encourage you to visit and dispute what you hear."

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