



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

March 1, 2021

February 11 Meeting



Virginia Ellen and Sassy

Our February 11 Zoom meeting was an interesting one! 14 members of our club welcomed speakers **Mary Szakmeister** and **Virginia Ellen** of **Artists at Heart, LLC**. They own and operate a jewelry and pottery studio in west Allentown. They sell their unique, hand-made goods at festivals and events, and through their website, artistsatheart.com. They also provide “art parties for all ages” at nursing homes and other facilities. Of course, the pandemic has greatly curtailed their activities. One of their most successful selling venues has been Celtic Fest, which was cancelled last year. And they have been prohibited from conducting art parties at facilities for nearly a year. Virginia started our Zoom visit with a tour of their studio. Pottery is her speciality, and she showed us a variety of tools and equipment needed to produce those goods. You start with clay

that is turned on a pottery wheel, followed by trimming. The item is dried for nearly two weeks, then bisque fired in a kiln at 1800 degrees. This is followed by several coats of glazing, the final coat fired at 2160 degrees! Virginia demonstrated turning clay to form a coffee mug, while her cat **Sassy** looked on. Virginia's interest in pottery started as a hobby. Her mom, Mary was a jeweler so they make a good artistic pair. **Terry Kennedy** suggested that they consider volunteering to become Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselors since they have had scouts visit their studio in the past to learn how to make jewelry and pottery. One way our club may want to partner with Artists at Heart is for them to provide an art project for children to do at Boys and Girls Club clubhouses, or at other facilities. Virginia felt that they could provide a kit that included self-hardening clay to be decorated as a piece of jewelry. We will certainly explore this service project opportunity!

After this fascinating Zoom visit, **Alison Norton** mentioned another community service opportunity for our club. In March, PBS stations will be airing a "Be My Neighbor" children's event featuring Daniel Tiger. In conjunction with this program, PBS-39 will be offering "swag bags" to children who have signed up to participate. In the bags will be Daniel Tiger books, stickers, crayons, etc. Normally these items would be distributed at local PNC Bank locations. However, due to the pandemic families will either have to pick them up at Steel Stacks in Bethlehem, or volunteers will deliver the bags to their homes. Our club agreed to recruit volunteers for this purpose, beginning in late February.

John Moser announced a golf outing fundraiser for the Lehigh Christian Academy to be held on May 5, 2021 at the Green Pond Country Club. Money will be raised for their scholarship fund. John provided a PDF flyer for the fundraiser, which was forwarded to our members. We hope to be able to assemble a foursome!

District Midyear Conference

On February 20, **Enos Martin** and **Tom Harp** represented our club at the annual Pennsylvania District Kiwanis Midyear Conference, which was held virtually on Zoom. **Gov. Don Smith** welcomed the 100+ participants to the conference. Key Club Gov. **Ashley Wheeland** offered her best wishes. Kiwanis International Trustee **David Hurrelbrink** provided us with some inspiration for our mission. He mentioned the saga of Bette Nesmith, a typist who was frustrated with having to erase mistakes. In 1956 she invented a paint-like product that dried quickly and could be typed over. That formula became "Liquid Paper" and made Bette a multi-millionaire when she sold its rights to the Gillette Corporation. The point was that everyday people can come up with great ideas that solve problems, including challenges that Kiwanians face during a pandemic. KI **President Art Riley** then joined us with a pre-taped message. He was proud that Kiwanis now has 5 million Service Leadership Program members in over 80 countries. Those youth service clubs are the future of our organization. "Kiwanis will always prioritize children" he said. KI will be rolling out a new training program called "Kiwanis Amplified." It will emphasize the need to involve all of our members in club activities, to grow membership, provide pathways for leadership, and to embrace diversity. He also encouraged Kiwanis Clubs to partner with other community agencies and service clubs towards mutual goals and projects. He emphasized the need for us to innovate. Because "Kids Need Kiwanis."

Tom Harp attended a forum on "Making Virtual Meetings Fun and Inviting" presented by **Chris Martz** of Kiwanis International. Chris lamented that we are all suffering from "Zoom

fatigue.” We miss meetings and events in person. We are sick of spending hours glued to a computer screen, TV, tablet or phone. He suggested several games that could be played on-line during meetings or “game nights.” Card games, bingo, trivia, etc. Even 50/50 raffles can be conducted virtually. Consider having “hybrid” meetings where a few members meet in person and others participate via Zoom. Encourage members at home to pick out an heirloom, picture, or other item of significance with an interesting story behind it to share with other members. You can have a “Crazy Hat Day” or even a virtual “Happy Hour.” Chris suggested that we invite former members to join us at a Zoom meeting to share memories, and to encourage them to re-join. The point is to be creative and have fun at our virtual meetings.

A forum that both Tom and Enos attended was on “Virtual Fundraising.” **Anna Wu** of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District provided a wealth of information on successful fundraisers held on-line. In May, 2020 her club hosted a Virtual Wine Tasting fundraiser. For \$45, participants received a bag with 4 small bottles of wine and other goodies ahead of time. On the night of the fundraiser, the local winery joined in on the Zoom event to curate each wine as people opened bottles at home. 60 people attended that fundraiser. Other events included a virtual Mixology Class, a Paint and Wine Night, a Pizza Workshop and a Sushi Night. Ingredients were delivered to participants ahead of time. On the night of the event, instructors Zoomed in to teach everyone how to make those items. On February 13, 2021 their Kiwanis Region held a “Red, White and Brews” fundraiser involving wine and beer tasting. They also offered silent auction items for bid, using the one.bidpal.net website. The event raised \$60,000, with \$33,000 in sponsorships alone! That money went towards children’s health clinics in the region. Smaller fundraisers included Virtual Game Nights, including “Family Feud”, Trivia, Bingo and On-line Poker. These provide opportunities to socialize while raising money for a Kiwanis club, or for a variety of great causes in our community.



As was reported last month, 110 books from the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) on-line bookstore have been delivered to the Boys and Girls Club of Allentown. Children from the B&GCA clubhouses will be selecting 2-3 books each to read during the month of March. A Zoom reading event will be scheduled in April and our members will be invited to participate.

A Glance Into Our Past

100 Years Ago – March 1921

At the March 17th meeting, club secretary Rev. Simon Sipple read a letter of thanks to Club President David J. Lewis from President Warren G. Harding in a response to a congratulatory message sent to the President upon his inauguration. It was as follows:

My Dear Mr. Lewis, The President has asked me to express to you, and through you to the members of your club, his deep appreciation of your kind telegram of congratulations and good wishes. Sincerely yours, George B. Christian, Secretary to the President.

75 Years Ago – March 1946

At the March 14 meeting, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture Miles Horst spoke on "Soil Conservation in Pennsylvania." Along with the regular membership, 20 Lehigh County farmers were in attendance to hear the address.

50 Years Ago – March 1971

The club began its annual talent search among its members, who could sing, dance and act, to fill roles for the 33rd annual Ladies Night to be held at the Lehigh Country Club. The Kiwanis Players presented the show "Would You Rather Live in Philly?" Kiwanis members Ted Gillespie, Steve Adams and Matt Gillespie penned the lyrics and provided music for the show. Kiwanis wives served as makeup artists.

25 Years Ago – March 1996

The Club donated 200 toothbrushes for Central Elementary School first graders for their annual Brush-In. Club members Bill Sharkan and Jim Chambers assisted the tooth fairy at the event. Club member Frank Szabo had to reschedule the first of four annual cleanups of the American Parkway from March 23 to April 14 due to a lack of signups to help with the project.

Club Anniversaries: **Jim Fronheiser** completed his 53rd year as a Kiwanian in February and is now on the way to 54 years. Believe it or not, he is only 11th on the all-time list which is led by Sam Saxton who will complete his 69th year in June! Bob Ashcraft celebrates his 19th year this month.

A new feature this month recognizes club members who received little attention during their years of membership. Despite being a longtime member, Vince Hollertz did not receive any recognition in our 100 year history other than being a member for over 40 years.

Vincent M. Hollertz - A member of our club for 40 years and 2 months, Vince joined the club on March 2, 1961. He remained a member until his passing at the age 92 on April 29, 2001. Despite his length of membership, Vince never held an elected office within the club. He did serve as a member of several committees including the Sports and Ball Gum Committees. When he joined the club, he was the District Group Manager for the Prudential Insurance Company with offices at 1132 Hamilton Street.

Vince was born in Brocton, Massachusetts, on August 29, 1908. He graduated from Brocton High School in 1928. He graduated from Upsala College in East Orange, NJ. Vince was an accomplished baseball and football player at both Brocton High and Upsala. He served in the Navy during World War II and achieved the rank of lieutenant. He moved to Allentown prior to 1955. He spent the rest of his life in the Allentown area and never married. He joined Brookside Country Club. According to the Morning Call, he played many rounds of golf at the club and in competition with other country clubs.

- **Enos Martin**

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, March 11, 12 Noon on Zoom. Julie Brinker, Director of Major Giving, PBS-39.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, March 31, 5 PM. Zoom Video Conference.



March Birthdays



23 - Young Chang

29 - Susan Martin



- Tom Harp, Editor