



“Building our community, one child at a time”

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## The Downtowner

*Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown*

May 1, 2021

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### April 8 Meeting



**Mike Ventola**

Our guest speaker at the April 8 meeting of the club was **Mike Ventola**, Director of Media Relations for the Lehigh Valley IronPigs. Mike grew up in Easton, and graduated from Immaculata University. He worked for several minor league baseball teams before his start with the IronPigs in February, 2019. One of his first public speaking engagements was with our club on March 14 of that year! He was happy to join us for the second time in his career, and to provide information on this year's IronPigs season to the 11 members of our club in attendance on Zoom. Mike made a point of saying that in this "Covid world" the IronPigs were dedicated to providing a safe experience for their fans at Coca-Cola Park. May 4 is Opening Day for this year's unusual season. Major League Baseball has disbanded all independent Minor Leagues. The International and Pacific Coast AAA leagues are done. The Eastern League and other AA leagues are gone. Nationwide, MLB-affiliated teams were reduced from 160 to 140 teams. In the future, MLB divisions will be established geographically, with playoffs within divisions and levels. This season is transitional, and limited due to Covid. The Pigs will be playing only 5 other teams from

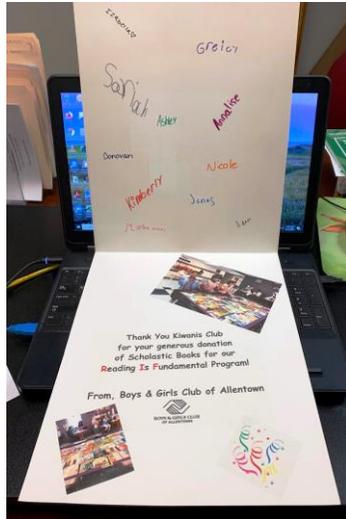
their division, to cut down on travel. They will play Tuesday through Sunday against the same team, alternating between weeks at home and away. There will be no playoffs this year. Based on current state guidelines, attendance at Coca-Cola Park will be limited to 50% of capacity. That includes ALL attendees - fans, players, employees, press, etc. So in reality only 4-5,000 seats out of 10,000 will be sold until restrictions are relaxed. Tickets are sold in pods of 2, 3 or 4 seats together, spread out at least 6 feet apart in each section. Hard tickets will not be issued. Tickets will be sold on-line to be printed out at home or scanned using your smart phone. Mike believes the Pigs will have a good team this season. They may start with a lineup that includes Scott Kingery, Odubel Herrera, Mickey Modiak and hot prospect Luke Williams. There will be many special events during the season at the ballpark. Food Truck Days, Oktoberfest, Bingo, etc. There will be exciting promotional giveaways, and appearances by Dwyer Brown from "Field of Dreams", Brian Baumgarden from "Parks & Recreation", Larry Bowa and Mitch Williams. Mike asked that if we go to a game to be patient with food service, which may be spotty at times. **Ricki Stringfellow** asked about volunteer opportunities at the ballpark. Mike could only say that it is uncertain whether or not they will allow volunteer groups to help out or to have displays set up in the concourse. Mike was very accommodating of all of our questions, a certainly got us excited about another fun IronPigs season!

**Enos Martin** reported on Division 17-18 news. Some clubs in the division are planning "Social Nights with Kiwanis." We can certainly consider hosting one once we return to the Shanty on 19<sup>th</sup> for dinner meetings. Regrettably, the Nazareth Kiwanis Club is giving up their charter by the end of the year. That will leave 8 clubs in the division. But Enos feels they are 8 "strong clubs" that should do very well in the year ahead. **Ricki Stringfellow** reported that the Emmaus Kiwanis Club Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success! They gave out every goody bag prepared for the children. She encouraged us to support their annual Basket Raffle fundraiser on Saturday, May 1 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Emmaus Community Park. They have 50 baskets with themes available. Visit their website, [www.emmauskiwanis.org](http://www.emmauskiwanis.org) for details. And, we congratulated **Deb Lamb** on her retirement from LVCC at the end of April. Deb is looking forward to it, after a long and successful career at LVCC. She mention that the following week was the "Week of the Young Child" where LVCC would be celebrating a theme each day that you could see on their Facebook page.



On April 7, ten members of our club attended a RIF Reading Event on Zoom, which was held at the Boys & Girls Club of Allentown Sixth Street Clubhouse. Senior Unit Director **Johanna Figueroa** greeted us, and introduced each child in attendance as they provided us with a report on their favorite book. 14 year-old **Nicole** liked her book, "Two Bobbi's" about a cat and dog that both lost their tails in Hurricane Katrina. The cat was blind, but the dog could see, and took care of her. **Kimberly**, age 10 picked out the book "Shelter Pet Squad" because she loves animals. A guinea pig named Jelly Bean was a main character. 8 year-old **Syria** like a book about Keena Ford, a girl in second grade who kept a journal. She had a lot in common with Syria. **Maria's** favorite book was "Mr. Nick is a

Lunatic.” He is a teacher who went on strike because there was no coffee in the teacher’s lounge. **Jonas**, age 11 loves sports, and selected a book called “Real Slam Dunk.” It was about a boy who got to meet his basketball idol. The children joined a chorus of “Thank you, Kiwanis” for the books we were able to provide through a RIF grant. We are glad that the books they received will be cherished for a lifetime.



**Thank You Cards from Children at the Boys and Girls Club**

## **Artists at Heart Kits**

On April 14, approximately 15 children from the Salvation Army Day Learning Center enjoyed an arts and crafts project created by Artists at Heart of Allentown, and sponsored by our club. Art kits containing self-hardening clay, paint and instructions were dropped off at the Salvation Army’s 8<sup>th</sup> Street Center. The children had a great time molding the clay into owl shapes, and decorating them in their own creative ways. Some photos from the event were already shared with our membership via e-mail. What follows are some additional photos for your enjoyment!



**Art Kit**



**Day Learning Center Classroom**



**Proud Children!**



**Thank You Cards and Note**

## **Mother's Day Flower Pot Project**

Each year, **Bob Ashcraft** has coordinated a service project around Mother's Day where children from two Lehigh Valley Children's Centers locations decorate small flower pots and fill them with soil and a flower seedling. On Friday, May 7 Bob will be visiting the LVCC Walnut Street and ELC Centers in Allentown with all of the materials for children to complete their projects. He has been working with **Deb Lamb** of LVCC to set this up. This year, a total of 71 Pre-K students at the two centers will be participating. Way to go, Bob and Deb! A wonderful gift that the children can give their moms.

## **Allentown Kiwanis Day at the IronPigs**

As of the publishing of this newsletter, we only have 10 tickets left for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual "Allentown Kiwanis Day at the IronPigs" game to be held on **Sunday, June 13** at Coca-Cola Park in Allentown. This will be a 1:35 PM game as the 'Pigs take on the Rochester Red Wings, an affiliate of the Washington Nationals. The cost of \$50 per ticket includes the comfort and amenities of a dugout suite, a 2-hour all-you-can-eat buffet, access to

private bathrooms and a bar, and access to the club lounge. The deadline for purchasing tickets is **May 13**. We have opened up the sale of tickets to other clubs in our division.

## Club Elections

At our May 13 meeting, we will formally elect officers and board members for our Club and Foundation, for the 2021-22 administrative year, which begins on October 1. So far, our slate of candidates are:

### **Kiwanis Club of Allentown, 2021-22**

- President: Tom Harp
- Vice-President: **OPEN**
- Treasurer: Enos Martin
- Secretary: Peg Harp
- Elected Board Members, 1-year term: Alison Norton, Mark Hanichak
- Elected Board Members, 2-year term: Terry Kennedy, Deb Lamb
- Elected Board Members, 3-year term: Bob Ashcraft, **OPEN**

### **Kiwanis Foundation, 2021-22**

- President: Todd Siegfried
- Vice-President: Bob Ashcraft
- Treasurer: Peg Harp
- Secretary: Tom Harp
- Elected Trustees: Young Chang, Terry Kennedy

So, we still have two vacant positions available, Vice-President/President-Elect and an elected member of the Board of Directors, 3-year term. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions!

## A Glance Into Our Past

### ***100 Years Ago – May 1921***

The Kiwanis Club baseball team took on the Muhlenberg College Phi Kappa Tau fraternity for the second time in a week and for the second time received a drubbing by the collegians. Mercifully, the Kiwanians announced at the beginning of the fifth inning that they could no longer endure the suffering. The final score was 20-10. However, despite two consecutive losses to the Muhlenberg team, the Kiwanians announced that they would return to avenge the two defeats.

### ***75 Years Ago – May 1946***

The Allentown High School Band provided a concert for the Kiwanis Club at the Americus Hotel. The Kiwanians gave the band a rousing ovation at the completion of their performance. The sixty-member band was directed by Albertus L. Myers. The Eighth Street Bridge in Allentown was officially named after Albertus Myers in 1974. He also was the long-time conductor of the Allentown Band and a member of John Phillip Sousa's Band.

### **50 Years Ago – May 1971**

At the May 6<sup>th</sup> club meeting, current member Sam Saxton was elected president for 1971-72. He would lead a club which at the time had 144 active, 18 privileged, and 25 senior members for a total membership of 187. Now 50 years later, Sam is still a member of our club.

### **25 Years Ago – May 1996**

Twenty-five years later, the total membership dropped to 90 with 72 active, 1 privileged and 17 senior members. Mark Hanichak, who just rejoined our Club after an absence for many years, was elected club president for 1991-92 at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Welcome back, Mark!

**Club Anniversaries:** Terry Kennedy celebrates his 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a club member this month.

**Celebrating past members:** Raymond H. Butz was a club member for 38 years, achieving the 55<sup>th</sup> longest membership in club history. He joined the club in 1958 and retained his membership until his passing on May 10, 1996, at the age of 92. Despite his 38 years as a member, he did not serve in any board position with the club. He did serve as chairman of the Reception, Fellowship and Music Committee for many years, Ray was employed by the Pennsylvania Independent Oil Company for 56 ½ years retiring as vice-president in 1973.

- **Enos Martin**

## **Upcoming Meetings and Activities**

**SERVICE PROJECT – Friday, May 7, 9 AM, Mother’s Day Flower Pots, LVCC Walnut Street and ELC Locations. Bob Ashcraft.**

**MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, May 13, 12 Noon on Zoom. Speakers will be Mark Hanichak, Senior Director for Geisinger Health Foundation and Glenn Bernius, Geisinger Health System Director, Janet Weis Children’s Hospital. Their topics will be the Children’s Miracle Network and the Janet Weis Hospital.**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, May 26, 5 PM. Zoom Video Conference.**



### **May Birthdays**



**5 – Diane Lariar  
30 – John Moser**

- **Tom Harp, Editor**