

R O T A R Y C L U B



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OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF ST. HELENA CLUB

Tuesday, October 28, 2008

Editor: Doug Ernst
If you have any comments or questions, email the editor.

Future Speakers

Oct 28 2008

[JoAline Olsen/Elaine John](#)
"St. Helena Hospital's Master Plan"

Nov 4 2008

[RYLA Student](#)

Dec 9 2008

[DARK](#)

Feb 12 2009

[Valentine Celebration](#)
"Sweetheart Lunch"

Jun 25 2009

[DEBUNKING](#)

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Meeting Report October 21 2008

by *Wm. J. McIlmoyl*

Opportunity knocks at Oct 21 Rotary lunch



Nancy Levenberg began her introduction by saying that **Lois Swanson** of the **Women's Opportunity Fund** needed no introduction, and Nancy was right. Lois has come before St Helena Rotarians for several years now to make an appeal for the support for micro loans to women in developing countries. This is exciting and life-changing work, and Lois was on hand to give us some first hand stories of how the money raised last year touched the lives of many women in Mexico.

"Every dollar raised changes the face of poverty," Lois said, and she gave witness to the infusion of hope that Opportunity International provides. Much more than just money, there is a vast network of support, mentoring and accountability built into the loan giving system. So not only do these entrepreneurial women receive small and short-term loans, they also get support through weekly small group meetings with their loan officers. In the course of their gathering, the women are given sound financial advice and are also held accountable for the funds they have been given. Amazing to me was the 98% payback rate on the loans overall.

For example, Clementine, from Mexico, whose business consisted of selling one bag of sorghum at a time and getting nowhere. Clementine gets a loan from Opportunity International and before you know it she's selling a thousand bags a week and is thriving beyond what could be imagined, transforming not only her life, but the life of the entire village she lives in. Very inspiring stuff.

Lois then introduced **Michael Gallagher**, former Silicon Valley marketing guru turned VP of Opportunity International. His heart has been touched by the lives that have been changed and the incredible difference that these loans make. He has actually been to Mexico to see first hand how the money had been put to use and the kinds of things that the women and their businesses are accomplishing. After showing a brief video clip from Rwanda that highlighted the meetings that the women attend, Michael talked about the genius of the process and how effective it is.

Like Lois, he also had success stories of women whose businesses really took off. One woman who operated a small taco stand and made her tacos

by hand, got a loan and bought a machine that would increase her output by 500%! Do the math on how that changed her life, and that of her husband...and family..and friends...and village. And on the stories go.

How fortunate we are as Rotarians to be able to buy some lovely flowers that will beautify our homes and at the same time change the face of poverty in some 28 countries around the world. Next year, our contributions will go to Tanzania. You go, Girls!

Visiting Rotarians:

Not for the first time: **Kathy Polichek** from Donora PA. Kathy and her husband, Bill, enjoy a dual residence between CA and PA.

Guests:

- **Cindy Warren's** guest **Sarah Crull**, City Council candidate
- **Nancy Levenberg's** guests. **Lois Swanson** and **Michael Gallagher**
- **Wendel Laidley's** guest was his bride of 44 years, **Inger**
- **Jim Batcher's** guest. **Michael Hanna**
- **Servaas Mes's** guest ..**Dr. Richard Hyde**

Announcements:

The Rotary Foundation dinner is coming up on November 15. Raffle tickets are going for \$20 and proceeds will go to the Foundation.

Raffle:

Ron Sculatti took a shot at the black marble and came up white. **Jim Bachor** and **Joice Beatty** were the other winners

Finemaster:

The finemaster assigned for the day was a total bonehead who never even looked on the assignment sheet to see that it was his day. What a jerk! How can you run a Club with guys like that? That guy would be yours truly. Oops!

President Carol did ask for bellringers:

- **David Brotemarkle** made the pilgrimage to see his daughter at UCLA for the parents weekend. He watched the Bruins play and they won! \$20.
- **Dick Osborn** gave \$25 for the brave and capable firefighters that saved so much property in last weekend's fires.
- **Charlotte Williamson** bemoaned the loss of 3 out of 4 of her grape varieties to frost and announced herself as a grape-leaf grower. All she had to give was \$5. God bless next year's crop, Charlotte.
- **Phil Toohey** has been a staff writer for the Star for over a year now and has produced about a dozen articles. He finally got his first check and gave \$25 toward **Doug Ernst's** Paul Harris.
- **Pres. Carol** summarily fined **Fr Mac, Doug Ernst, and Kathleen Patterson** for shirking assigned Rotarian duties. Pay attention!!

That's my story and I'm stickin' to it.

Pax, MAC+