



The Cog

Rotary Club No. 3503
P. O. Box 544,
St. Marys, OH 45885
www.stmarysrotary.org
September 25, 2013

Call to Order

President Dan Burke called the meeting to order. Allen Baskett offered the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests Jan Heinrich, and Grant Cook from SM Memorial High were welcomed. Kraig Noble led us in a rousing rendition of "Home On The Range."

Happy Dollars

We had a lot of Happy Rotarians today...they included President Dan, was happy for another successful Dictionary Project Susan Crotty, Shawn Brown, Ellen Hunter, Tammy Sanford, Rita Hilde, Kraig Noble, Scott Ross, Keith Fledderjohann, Robbie Burke, and Sandy Gerdeman were all Happy Rotarians today.

Fines

Sandy Gerdeman administered the Fines today...Her victims included Travis Elsass, Alex Pittmen, Robbie Burke, Gayle Masonbrink, Paige Canfield, Shawn Brown, Marty Dodrill, Kraig Noble (Twice), Scott Ross, Dan Burke, and even Sandy Herself.

Announcements

The New Member Orientation today was well attended and Dan appreciated the participation of our newest Rotarians.

The club also received a thank you from Mrs. Carter for the clubs donation to the school.

Program

PE Randy introduced today's speaker Connie Backlund from the National Parks Service. Connie grew up on a 100-acre family farm in St Marys, Ohio, where she developed a love for the outdoors and the wildlife surrounding her.

"My mother always hoped I would join her in the kitchen, but I was always out with my dad. I was his little shadow," she remembers. "As a kid, I thought my dad knew everything...About trees, birds, the weather, everything!"



It was an "all-American farm," Backlund says. "We grew corn, wheat, oats, and soybeans and had all complement of livestock: dairy cows, chickens, ducks, rabbits, as well as dogs, cats and goldfish, everything but goats!"

"Being a steward of the land is what I am about," Backlund says, adding that her commitment extends to the family farm where she discovered her passion.

Before his death last fall, Backlund's father "wanted to ensure that the farm would always remain a working farm," she explains.



"One of my proudest accomplishments was helping him to place the farm in an agricultural easement. We did this back in 2000, and it was the second farm in Ohio to be placed in such an easement."

The conservation easement held by the Ohio Department of Agriculture assures that "the woods will always be woods," she says.

As a young adult, she applied for a summer job with the National Park Service, but she wasn't hired. She became a cabin maid and waitress Yellowstone National Park instead. Eventually she was hired into three sequential temporary park positions, and then started working full time at Mammoth Park, Ky.

After four years at Mammoth, she served for five years at Cape Hatteras and the Wright Brothers National Memorial and seven years at Mather Training Center at Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

For the last 18 years, she has been the superintendent of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

Backlund retired in October, 2012 after 38 years with the National Park Service, but she stays active as an advocate for national parks and a volunteer at the Carl Sandburg Home.



"Education has been the key throughout my career," Backlund says. "I love explaining why we do what we do, how it's grounded in legislation, and helping people to understand and appreciate the National Park Service

"The Park Service is a huge team of people working together — locally, regionally, statewide, and nationally — to tell the stories of our land and its history. I feel a great deal of gratitude for having been able to do meaningful work and sharing that with others," she says.

Backlund met her husband, Gib, at her first permanent post at Mammoth Cave.

They were co-workers and neighbors living in park housing. They married in an outdoor wedding two and a half years later, and they will celebrate their 31st anniversary this October.

Both love being outdoors, especially in snow. They have a Samoyed, their third, a fluffy white northern dog breed traditionally used as sled dogs and reindeer herders.

Backlund plans to continue nurturing her adventurous spirit in retirement. "We hope to travel, and to volunteer at the Sandburg home and in other parks, hike more and enjoy her home.

"A lot of students have asked me, 'how did you get your job?' I want to encourage students to savor the quest, be true to their goals, and don't give up," she says.

"I hope young people, in particular, find career pathways where they can work in their area of passion, so their journey can be a good one, too."

Queen of Hearts

Robbie Burke won the drawing but the Queen eluded her today.

Upcoming Programs

- 10-2 Dean Bonnie Mathies, Wright State University-Lake Campus
- 10-9 Galen Cisco Day

Upcoming Greeters

- 10-2 Scott Ross
- 10-9 Mike Makely

**Please note: All Rotarians scheduled to greet, please be in place by 11:30 a.m.*

The meeting was adjourned following the recitation of the **Four Way Test of the Things We Think, Say or Do:**

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?