

The Roundtable

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Bangor Area Rotary Breakfast

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Caring, Loving, Challenged **Greg Urban and the Maine Veterans' Home**

Greg Urban, Administrator for Bangor's Maine Veterans' Home, presented his second classification talk to the Club this morning. His first, given around 15 years ago (how easily we forget) was soon after he the joined Breakfast Rotary.

Greg was born in Madison, Wisconsin. His peripatetic youth included a move to the Twin Cities in Minnesota, where he played an amalgam of sports and took piano lessons.



His father was transferred to California when Greg was 14. "California was a whole different experience than Minnesota," he said. He noticed a couple of kids would be absent during a class. He found out that they went outside to smoke some pot. "You were never allowed absence from class in Minnesota. And where would you go in Minnesota?"

Shifting from sports that required a lot of running to the more stationary shot put, he continued his piano

study. He also backpacked in the Sierras.

Having settled in California, Greg enrolled at the University of California/Davis in Sacramento. His parents then moved back to Minnesota. Greg decided to stay put (no connection to the shot put) and he transferred to UC/San Diego where he majored in physiology. At some point, he abandoned the piano. "I have never touched it since."

An avid sailor, Greg recounted his brief personal relationship with the famous Santa Ana winds. "They come up quickly and suddenly you're in 40-50 mile-per-hour winds. The Coast Guard had to rescue us. We made the front page of the San Diego Union newspaper," Greg said.

After college, Greg sold industrial microscopes. He happened to meet the woman who would become his wife. She sold surgical microscopes. So, they were able to take closer looks at each other. They didn't share every interest: she enjoyed spelunking, repelling down into dark caves, nor was Greg chafing at the bit to do skydiving.

The extensive travel at microscope sales and his wife's pregnancy caused Greg to consider a different career. A friend suggested nursing home administration. He took training, and came to Bangor (his wife is a native of Chester, Maine) and worked at Ross Manor. His 15-year tenure at the Maine Veterans' Home is unusual for an administrator.

The Maine Veterans' Home is a state organization organized as an independent, not-for-profit entity. It offers occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. The state does not control the facilities,

Maine has six homes. The skill care unit was recently renovated. The home expanded its therapy unit six years ago that includes a fitness gym and a therapy pool. The home also expanded its outpatient therapy.

Greg commented that the Maine Veterans Homes CEO, Kelly Kash, is a good person to have in that position. "He has good connections with Augusta." A MaineBiz profile of Mr. Cash hinted at the mission of Rotary: "If I could sum up Kelley in one line it would be 'Service before self,'" says the nonprofit's chief operating officer, Deb Fournier, who has worked alongside Kash for more than eight years. "That is his core value, through and through. Serving veterans and other people is just part of his fabric. It's how he leads. It's who he is."

Greg is a man who loves to go to work. "I love the vets. I am a history buff, and talking with them is like reading history books. Of course, there are also challenges." He has two daughters, one of whom is studying biomedical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The other daughter is still studying life's options. Greg was a Rotarian in California, and **Paul Miragliuolo** sponsored his membership to the Breakfast Rotary. **Ken Huhn** said Greg mentored him. **David Zelz** said that his father was in the Maine Veterans' Home before he died. "He got fantastic treatment from two CNA's. You have a wonderful staff."



& CETERA

President June Kontio paid a fine for her birthday; she was serenaded appropriately. The Bangor Noon Rotary, Old Town Rotary and Breakfast Rotary will meet to discuss strategies to bring in more members to our respective clubs. We will also do the wheelchair project again with **Ken Nagle** chairing the project.

The redesign of our club's banner is underway with a photo contest. Photos that represent Bangor will be considered. Visitors to Rotary Clubs trade the banners. **Kristy**

Kimball will accept one or two photos no later than June 7. Kristy or **Karen Schaller** can provide the guidelines. Kristy will be cycling in the 180-mile Trek Across Maine. June 14-16. She will match your donation dollar-for-dollar. It benefits the American Lung Association.

The other **Kimball, Ken**, distributed a "Position Available" list for the *All That Jazz* program for the next year. April fundraising events from *The Rotarian* magazine formed most of the content for Ken Huhn's Rotary Moment. He included the story of a Polio First Responder who works under dangerous conditions in the Punjab province of Pakistan.

Happy and Sad dollars told of David Zelz's joy at Mick Jagger's successful surgery. On the other hand, the band's tour is postponed until maybe in the fall may conflict with stadium bookings already scheduled with football games.

Lisa Wahlstrom and **Larry Diehl** thanked the membership for its support of the Good Samaritan agency for its Bowl-a-Thon. Larry will be absent soon as he drives his son to California for an internship.

Everything but the kitchen sink... and that may also be affected. **Pudge Harrison** announced his kitchen-remodeling project.

Les Myers- April 11, 2019



Springtime at Mt. Hope Cemetery
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