

This Week

Sonia Kwon,
*Director of Programs
and Operations,
NEI Headquarters,
Pasadena, CA*
**Program Host
Dawn Digrius**



Sonia Kwon is the Director of Programs and Operations at NEI headquarters in Pasadena, and is responsible for supporting the US., S. Korea, and Afghanistan offices. NEI's goal is to create a soy food industry led by Afghans as a self-sustainable solution to malnutrition in Afghanistan. Since the NEI team achieved its mission in 2019, Kwon's goal is to refine NEI's exit strategy as the Afghanistan government

Please turn to This Week p. 4

Fear of Another Failure Looms

The title of this article is the same as the article written by Bill Plaschke of the Los Angeles Times on Thursday, October 3, 2019 on page D11 – Sports Section. He wrote that it is great that the LA Dodgers are in the playoffs for the seventh consecutive time. But he also says that it is cruel to put the fans through another month of hell. What happened to allowing FAILURE to be a good teaching tool?

This month, club member Ed Jasnow starts contacting the local PUSD schools about our Mini-grant program for teachers. They will be allowed to request grants up to \$400 to help them carry out their tasks of teaching future leaders of this country and world. Like mentors, coaches, and executives, they help people learn and grow. These people understand that failure is part of learning. However, in professional sports (and, of course, all levels of amateur), a team or individual needs to win in order to keep up the sponsors or allow the organization to make money.

In Rotary, it is important that we find ways to keep new and old members engaged. It can be through club projects, activities, social events, District Trainings or just the meetings. All of us should be looking toward the goal of helping other Rotarians. Sometimes it takes a phone call or a letter. As it was mentioned a week



On the Mark

By Mark Mariscal, President

ago, long time member Boyd Hudson is going through some medical challenges. A phone call or an email can help brighten his day. Steve Cunningham has made a strong comeback from his stroke. Some of our members reach out to him monthly since he has not been to a meeting for almost a year. He did attend a couple of the summer concerts this year.

This past Saturday, I attended an all-day Rotary training with the District Governor and Assistant Governors. I was invited because of my role as a Grant Approver for the District Designated Funds (DDF) for District 5300. The training was conducted by staff from the Rotary Zones 26 & 27. More information will be shared at future meetings and through *Sparks*.

For those of you like Dennis Mehringer, Kimmit Haggins (and I am sure there are others) and me, we will cheer on our local Dodgers to make it through the play-offs and reach the World Series. If they don't win it all, I will NOT CONSIDER that a failure. Life throws many curve balls. I guess I am glad I don't hit them for a living. ○

Greeter of the Week

October 10
Ruben Alvarado

A Visit from the Sheriffs



We were joined on Thursday by Captain Marjory

Jacobs and Lieutenant Alex Canchola. Captain Jacobs (who likes to be called "Jory") was recovering from a touch of laryngitis but really wanted to come speak to the club. She showed a brief film on the history of women in the Los Angeles Sheriffs Depart-

ment (LASD) and is often asked to speak on the opportunities for women in law enforcement. She has felt very blessed in her career, and through lots of hard work, has been able to be successful. Currently 22 percent of the command staff in the LASD are women – with 18 percent of the department now women.

New Sheriff Alex Villanueva is bringing many changes to the department. There is a lot of attention on recruitment and retention. He wants deputies to remain in their stations for longer periods to help foster relationships in the community.

Lt. Canchola provided the club with crime statistics. Year to date crimes are up 5 percent. There has been a drastic reduction in residential burglaries and robberies. Unfortunately, thefts from vehicles are up. Because

alert people to be careful.

Assaults are also, however

these have been from people who know each other.

The station is working through their clergy network and other resources to help people better deal with conflict.

Jacobs and Canchola explained how the Altadena and La Crescenta stations work together. For example, Altadena has no jail. People are transported to La Crescenta when they need to be incarcerated.

We look forward to helping the Sheriffs with their pancake breakfast on October 19 at Grocery Outlet and with other projects throughout the year.



of this team was formed this summer to focus on vehicle breaks and

October Economic & Community Development

Program Chair, Dawn Digrius
 October 10 - Sonia Kwon - Craft Talk
 October 17 - Megal O'Rorke, BTI Appraisal
 October 24 - Richard Kurtz - Craft Talk
 October 31 - Jim Osterling, Trustee, Pasadena Community College District

Sparks is published 48 weeks a year and is the official publication of the Rotary Club of Altadena. The deadline for submission of articles is Friday at 6p to current editor email, fax, or delivery.

Rotary Club of Altadena - #7183

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Meets: Thursday, 12:10p

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Jacque Foreman Sparks/Website

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Tony Hill Youth Contests/Awards

Mike Zoeller Youth Projects

John Frykenberg Vocational

Editor, Design & Typesetting Foreman Graphics

Photography Jacque Foreman

Congratulations



Birthdays



07 - Noriko Suzuki Mehringer
 08 - Susan Cox
 10 - Heather Campbell
 20 - Charles Wilson
 24 - Jim Gorton
 27 - Dawn Digrius (Smith)
 30 - Gary Landon (Vega)



Anniversaries



01 - Freddy & Margarita Figueroa
 19 - David & Elsa Smith

Rotary Members Need to Know



This is Rotary's plan for the next five years:

- Increase our impact,
- Expand our reach,
- Enhance participant engagement, and increase our ability to adapt.

By helping to realize the goals of this plan, you ensure a stronger and even more effective future for Rotary – a tremendous legacy. Our plan is rooted in our tried-and-true values and builds on the remarkable capabilities and spirit of Rotarians.

It is clear-eyed about the challenges that Rotary and the world face. It protects the value of human connection in an age of technology. It lays out a path for bringing great ideas to the forefront of the global imagination of what's possible.

And our plan will provide us with a continuity of vision from year to year, keeping us moving toward fulfilling our shared purpose.



PRIORITY 1 **Increase Our Impact**

People of Action
are effective
problem-solvers.

Why do Rotarians achieve so much? We invest in relationships. We make decisions grounded in evidence. We know how to mobilize our networks to create solutions that last. And we're always learning from our

experiences in projects, clubs, and careers.

Throughout the fight to end polio, we've shown what we can do when we draw on our collective strengths. We've created solutions that match the people they serve. We've evaluated the results to learn from our successes and setbacks.

This is a model we will use again and again in pursuit of our audacious goals: educating the world's children, ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation, helping local economies grow sustainably, and so much more.



PRIORITY 2 **Expand Our Reach**

People of Action
activate and
inspire one another.

We know that our capacity to make a difference is larger when more people unite with us. We want the world to appreciate our ambitious, compassionate, and inclusive spirit – because, when they do, they see that Rotary is the source for the person-to-person involvement so many are seeking.

Told widely and emphatically, our stories give people hope that the world can change for the better, inviting listeners to imagine themselves as part of that change, too.



PRIORITY 3 **Enhance Participant Engagement**

People of Action
strive to understand
the needs of others.

Just like the people and communities we serve, our participants need to feel seen and heard. They're seeking experiences that feel personally and professionally relevant and fulfilling.

When they see our dedication to investing in them at every stage of their professional life, our participants are eager to go the distance with us – even at a time when there are many other options for networking and volunteering.



PRIORITY 4 **Increase Our Ability to Adapt**

People of Action
are inventive,
entrepreneurial,
and resilient.

We've shown throughout our history that we excel at finding new ways to lead the world to lasting change. And we've proven in our own careers that we know how to help organizations of every kind move forward. That's why new approaches to our organizing principles don't threaten our sense of who we are. We're ready to seek out fresh opportunities, create more paths to leadership, open up our conversations to diverse voices, and simplify how we operate – with confidence.

What is the relation between *bacon* and Rotary? None, if you are talking about the (delicious) pork product. But, if you are talking about Sir Francis Bacon, the 17th century English philosopher (and surely you were), it would be fair to say that Rotary might not exist today without him.

Bacon was born on 1561 and entered Trinity College at Cambridge College in 1573. Although it was not unusual for students to enter university in their mid-teens, entering at age 12 was unusual even then. He quickly established himself as a brilliant student, and in a meteoric career rose through the political jungle of English politics. He spoke several languages, wrote treatises on philosophical problems, and became a legal advisor to the English court. Thomas Jefferson, our third president, declared Bacon, along with Newton and John Locke, one of the three greatest men that had ever lived.

But among Bacon's vast and philosophical ruminations, one thing bothered him above all. He detested the university education that he had received. It was based upon the idea of the "disputation," a method of argument. At the time, theology was considered the "Queen of the Sciences." It was a prerequisite for receiving a university degree. Students had to memorize complex religious concepts, and argue them to the professors' satisfaction. The student who could quote the most relevant biblical or theological concepts, and thereby crush his opponent (no women allowed at university), would win.

Bacon despised this education system. What new knowledge did it bring to the world? How did it help to alleviate pain, or cure mankind's ills? It didn't. Rather,

the *disputatio* solved no problems except irrelevant ones, advanced human understanding not at all, cured no maladies, and created armies of students prepared only for intellectual snobbery.

A new system was needed, and so Bacon created one. In his seminal work, *Novum Organum* ("A New System") he formulated education based on observation of nature. Carefully observe nature. Draw hypotheses about what you have seen. Try to draw conclusions that match your observations. Disregard ancient ideas, no matter how ingrained, which are inconsistent with nature and cannot be true.

Although not immediately, over time the theologically based *disputatio* was discarded. Descartes, Newton and other empirically-based philosophers recorded their observations and drew evidence-based conclusions. On this simple premise the great scientific revolutions flourished, and this new method of thinking brought about our modern world.

Rotary is now the direct beneficiary of this scientific revolution by distributing its results: water purification systems, aquaponics, solar electrical grids and lighting, simple bridges and building methods - the list goes on and on. And, of course, Rotary has undertaken its greatest and most ambitious project—the elimination of the ancient scourge of polio. These are all ideas which now travel at the speed of light through satellite communications systems and delivered via hand-held devices which fit in your pocket. Their impact is profound and long-lasting. Spreading these ideas around the world in order to alleviate poverty and suffering is a foundation of Rotary's mission and its success.

So now consider if Francis Bacon had not rebelled against the pointless intellectual merry-go-round of the *disputatio* and had never proposed instead his method of observing and testing ideas to advance useful knowledge. Surely at some future date great minds might have reached the same conclusions about the arid nature of the existing educational system - or perhaps not. Could it be that we today would instead be parsing concepts based on medieval theologians and philosophers, and consider them the final word in man's knowledge? We cannot know, because at least one man had the courage to challenge the system, ushering in a different world.

So, in the sinuous way of ideas and time, Rotary surely owes a great debt to this 17th century thinker.

(In turn, I am greatly indebted for these ideas to Alan C. Kors, Ph.D., the erudite historian and teacher at the University of Pennsylvania, who frequently reminds us that "ideas have histories.") ○

This Week

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adopts their programs to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal #2: End Hunger by 2030.

Sonia was born in the US and raised in New England, finishing high school in Southern California. She attended UC Davis as an undergraduate and then decided to attend Boston University's School of Public Health for graduate school after visiting Afghanistan in 2007.

Before NEI, Sonia worked for the City of Los Angeles for Councilmember Jack Weiss and held a variety of part-time jobs in her spare time. ○

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