



Waunakee Rotary Club

Nov. 17, 2011
Vol. 46 No. 11

When the Chernobyl nuclear disaster occurred 25 years ago, 404,000 people were displaced and resettled, and today, it's estimated 5.5 million are affected. Thanks to the efforts of many, including some in the Madison area, people in those affected are receiving help.

Tammy Parks and Robert Schuettpelez of the Friends of Chernobyl Centers, U.S., described the Friends group and how they became involved at the Nov. 10 Waunakee Rotary Club Meeting.

Tammy said she received her undergraduate degree in Russian language and history, and had worked as a translator. She also has a foster son from the Ukraine.

Similarly, her co-worker, Robert, and his wife adopted two children from Russia.

Robert reminded the club about the April 26, 1986, explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. It is the largest man-made disaster in history.

Chernobyl was the crown jewel of the Ukraine, supplying 10 percent of electricity. After the accident, reports of mismanagement and cover-ups instilled distrust. Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet leader, said handling of the disaster brought down the Soviet Union, Robert added.

The radiation released was equivalent to 100 nuclear bombs, and it spread throughout Europe, mainly concentrating in Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus. It left behind ghost cities although a few people have moved back. Still, about 3,000 people continue to work at the site.

There is still the problem of containing the tons of radioactive materials. The current shell is deteriorating, and plans are in the

works to construct another container, but Ukraine has little money to build it. It has become an international project, and the U.S. had pledged \$300 million toward it.

Meanwhile, residents are left with many mental, health and psycho-social impacts, and five community centers support them, providing assistance to families in crisis and with health problems.

The Friends of the Chernobyl Centers, U.S. supports those community centers, Robert said. They also promote volunteerism, which was outlawed under the Soviets.

Robert said he had the opportunity to travel to the Ukraine, and today, the Chernobyl site is a tourist attraction.

"These communities really rely on these center, and while our dollars go a long way in the Ukraine, inflation is eating away at them," he said.

Other items:

- Ed Niebuhr said the Christmas Party has been moved from Nov. 15 to Nov. 14.

- If you have the newsletter mailed to you through the U.S. mail but haven't been getting one, it may be because your faithful newsletter writer lost her list of addresses. See Roberta Baumann if you are having a problem. I did manage to recover most of them.

- Phil Willems reported that the Rotary Lights brochure will be 18 pages. There will a coupon in it inviting prospective members to attend a meeting as a guest of the club to see what Rotary is all about.

- President John Cullen said he had received letters thanking the club for donations to Schumacher Farm County Park and the

OFFICERS

JOHN CULLEN, PRESIDENT • SHELLEY MOFFATT, PRESIDENT ELECT
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • JOY MCMERTY, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

ELLEN SCHAAF • LINDA OLSON • SEAN WAYNE • GORDON MEFFERT

Calendar of Events:

- Nov. 24, *Thanksgiving Breakfast at the Senior Center*
- Dec. 14, *Christmas Party at Rex's Innkeeper*
- June 8-9, *Rotary District Conference, The La Crosse Center on the Mississippi.*

Waunakee Ecumenical Board.

Guests: Jody Pulvermacher, guest of Bob Pulvermacher; Tammy Parks, guest of Ken Pesik; Paul Gadian, 2nd or 3rd proposal for membership.

Visiting Rotarians: Jenny Olsen, DeForest Rotary.

Birthdays: Nov. 30, Susan Vergeront (we'll sing to you early since we may not see you next week on Thanksgiving).

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Nov. 17, Pat Durden; Nov. 24, Thanksgiving; Dec. 1, Leonard Allen; Dec. 8, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: Nov. 17, Tom Sawyer (aka Phil Willems); Nov. 24, Thanksgiving; Dec. 1, Club Assembly; Dec. 8, Eleonora, exchange student from Northern Italy.

Greeters: Nov. 17, Ray Statz and Daren Steuart; Nov. 24, Thanksgiving Dec. 1, Don Tierney and Lucas Tierney; Dec. 8, Jon Townley and Jim Tubbs; Dec. 15, Chad Updike and Susan Vergeront.