

## Minutes of 7/27 Rotary Meeting

Present; Durand,Zoren,Stephenie,Peggy,Frank,Shelly,Joan and Mike

Guests; Donna Tregaskis, Rotarians Nancy Potter and George Gull

Dinner provided by Stephenie and Ben (who had a family gathering)

1. Nancy and George told us about their ongoing water project and showed pictures. See attached newspaper article from a prior presentation for details...
2. Durand reviewed supply situation for our next BBQ on August 12. No one was certain so Shelly and Zoren offered to check the trailer. (Shelly later emailed to say only clamshells and XL latex gloves are needed.)
3. Durand again led a discussion of new fund raising possibilities; Mardi Gras, demolition derby, etc. were mentioned but nothing was decided. He also floated the idea of "tabling" at the Tburg Festival Aug 22 to promote Rotary.
4. Shelly reported our inbound YEP student from Brazil is due in August does not yet have a firm arrival date.
5. Mike summarized the budget and said he will email a report to club members.
6. Peggy told us she and Zoren were unable to submit a district grant in time to fund the skin tone device for Brazil which Zoren had told us about months ago. She and he will submit it next spring along with the grant request to provide and plant more trees at the Fairgrounds.
7. Frank reminded we had an unhappy golfer, Mitch Weis who was on a CSP team, with a dietary restriction and was unable to eat the lunch. Those in attendance agreed to send him a \$25 gift card to Moosewood with our apologies. Frank will obtain and get it to Mitch.
8. Durand started a card game -so be sure to bring an extra \$ next meeting so you can play.
9. Most happy dollars were for our old friends George and Nancy and their good work.

Meeting adjourned 8:25.

# Ithaca and Costa Rica Rotarians rural well tower project

Ithaca Rotarians Nancy Potter and George Gull recently shared a story about a child who passed away from drinking contaminated water at her school in San Isidro de Pocosol. It was nearly ten years ago, but the story is far from dated because these are fears people living in rural areas of Costa Rica face regularly. Gull and Potter said regional officials investigated the child's death but nothing was done to improve the water quality in this remote village in northern Costa Rica.

By Mikayla "Mack" Roventi



However, this community near the Nicaraguan border will be able to drink clean water when a new water system is turned on. The project has been constructed by Agua Viva Serves, a Florida nonprofit, in partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Ithaca and San Jose Noreste.

Potter and Gull have been to Costa Rica many times to continue working on water projects, such as this one, in various rural areas. This specific project was for 75 homes along the Nicaraguan border and five more homes away from the border. Potter said that the systems are still working and working well. With this new system, there are a series of water meters that help track water usage once it is flowing into the homes.

The Rotary Club in Winter Park, Florida and they had a grant proposal to the Rotary Foundation to develop water systems for two communities. They were looking for someone basically boots on the ground to help get this proposal together and to connect with a local Rotary Club in Costa Rica," Potter said. "I became that person, I became the grant writer for the club and

we got a grant, we had around \$90,000." The new water system for San Isidro is funded by an \$82,000 Global Grant from The Rotary Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that supports service projects organized by Rotary clubs around the world. The Ithaca Rotary Club also raised \$7,000 for the project and Rotary District 7170 in the Southern Tier contributed \$10,000. To receive a global grant, Rotary clubs must meet several requirements, including partnering with a Rotary club in the country where the project

**"The community is involved in every step of the way. They are our partners and we have worked side by side to get this done."**

GEORGE GULL  
Ithaca Rotarian

is located and ensuring sustainability. Gull said the problem with the water supply in rural areas of Costa Rica stems from the shallow wells residents have dug by hand, which are prone to contamination from agricultural runoff and raw sewage.

Costa Rica's government has been expanding this kind of water access to more parts of the country, but it takes much more time and financial resources than they can sometimes afford which is why volunteer work from groups like Agua Viva Serves and Rotary are important. Gull added that these systems are sometimes just a placeholder until the government can come in and build or replace their own well and water tower system.

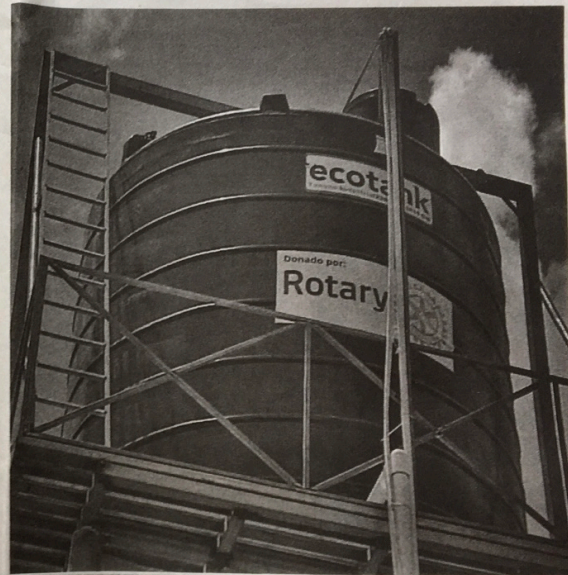


Photo provided

Pictured is one of the numerous watertowers donated by the Rotary Club. In order to conduct these projects, Ithaca Rotary works with Costa Rica's local Rotary chapters.

"Aqua Viva did a lot of assessment of the community's needs. They're basically a Community Development Association and so they need someone to donate the land for the well tower," Potter said. "They needed to also have the community say they want it too, whether they have a petition that people sign or they have a big meeting, something to show that the community supports this project. They also need to have access to electricity nearby. Even though it is a gravity fed system, you have to get the water up into the tank before the gravity part can happen."

Since the start of this project in 2015, Potter and Gull have re-

gravity-fed water projects in other parts of Costa Rica with community partners and volunteer support.

"This is also really important for public health, to have improved public health you need clean water," Gull said. "The year before we had this tower running there were around 40 cases of hepatitis. Once the tower was installed and running, those cases started to decrease, so this is important for the communities."

"We just turn on the tap and we often don't think about where it's coming from," Potter said. "And we don't think about whether it's clean or not. People kept telling us how

## Tompkins Weekly

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