



**FRIDAY, April 10, 2026**

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The meeting was called to order by President Ted at 12:15 and opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag, but I missed who led that (sorry). Anita R. led us in the 4-Way Pact and the invocation was provided by Jack L.

**Our visitors** and we had a lot of them!

Barry C., Tim A., Al B., Karen F., Dick K., Sandy K, Annie M. Jesse, Dave B., Pete C., Joe P., Jill G., and Jim K.

**Announcements**

- ☞ Don M. informed the club that the tool box presentation will be taking place at Hoffman Estates High School next Friday from noon to 1:00 pm. The types of tool kits being presented has been expanded and for the first time there will be young women in the recipient pool, A limited number of our members can attend; due to space constraints He circulated a sign-up sheet for those who want to be there. Ted encouraged the rest of us to be at the club meeting at that time!
- ☞ Eileen reminded us that the first Butterfly Garden Clean-up is next Saturday, April 18, starting at 9 am, and as many volunteers as possible are needed. The spring clean-up is always a big one.
- ☞ Jeff S. shared information on the first roadside cleanup of the year on Saturday, April 25. Please let Jeff S. know if you can help with this. It usually takes about two hours (9-approximately 11 am).
- ☞ Jim F announced the NCAA poll winners.

**Happy \$\$\$s**

Unfortunately, I missed some or all of the first few “happys”...however, here is what I have:

- \$ Terry P kicked off the happiness, but I missed the reason
- \$ Glenn S was happy because of his two grandsons, one who is a pole vaulter and has battled severe medical issues this past year, but has come back strong. He won his first meet back and did very well. The second grandson played baseball, but hurt his back. He became a designated hitter on his team and went 2 for 3 at yesterday’s game,
- \$ Jack L because Michigan’s NCAA victory
- \$ Linda D because this NCAA pool was the first time she has not been out in the first round
- \$ Allen for his 3 guests and all the other guests here today
- \$ Anita was a winner in the “Rake-in the Cash” lottery tickets prize at the Bon Appétit event at Bell Works last night
- \$ Jeff and Jeanne S are extremely happy to welcome their second grandchild (first grandson) into their world

\$ Roger Smith for his NCAA pool win

\$ Don M celebrating 41 years together with his wife Jan ...but they both had to be reminded by their daughter that it WAS their anniversary

\$ Loren because he finally got his guest to attend the club with him

\$ Dick K (a guest) in celebration of all the accomplishments of his wife , who he met on an airplane

\$ John S for his guest Al B and his former track student Joe P

\$ Dave (Allen's guest) because Michigan won and Allen went to Michigan State

\$ Ted because his wife is in attendance, his son's baseball success this season and the fact that his NCAA team made it to the final four – it was a fun run

### **Fun and Frolic**

Our fine master Allen G, did his usual fine job of raising funds for the club. Fines were levied if you

- Don't have a guest at your table
- Did not bring a guest
- Are wearing clothing with company logo
- Are a Rotarian and are not wearing Rotary
- Were late
- Won money and didn't give Happy Dollars
- Were not fined today

As well as some special fines:

- Jim F gave him Michigan (no fine, just saying)
- Don M for long announcement
- Terry P for long happiness account for only \$1

### **Our program**

Our own Jeff Miller provided the program today and a wonderful program it was. He started by saying how good it is to be here. That has a very special meaning for him, given that 37 years ago he survived a plane crash to be here today.

Jeff shared brief background on himself. He and his wife met at their church when he was 12 and Michele was 10. They ended up marrying right after Jeff completed college. His early career was in the tech industry which was then a fairly new field. His job had him traveling all over the world, so airplanes were a part of his life.

Then 37 years ago he was making his way to Chicago to attend his grandfather's funeral when his plane crashed at the Sioux City airport when they were attempting an emergency landing. He and his family were in Durango, Colorado visiting Michele's parents when they got word of his grandfather's death. As part of a large close Italian family, there was no question that he would be at the wake and funeral. It was decided that Michele, who was pregnant with their third child, and his two children would stay in Durango and he would return there after the funeral.

He was dropped at the airport by his father-in-law the next morning and that is when the adventure began. The flight he was booked on was cancelled. He had the choice of rebooking

on a 727 or a DC10. He picked the DC10 because his experience was that the meals were better on DC10s. It was a good lunch and he even got to have a second one when his seatmate's son fell asleep and didn't eat. That was the last peaceful part of that flight.

They were cruising at 30,000 feet when there was a loud explosion. It was the engine at the rear of the plane and shrapnel from that exploded engine severed the main hydraulic line, the first backup hydraulic line and the second backup line. With all three lines gone, none of the systems for controlling the plane were functional. All the pilot had to use to control the plane was gravity and the two wing engines. Jeff told us that when you assume the crash position with hands on ankles and head down, you begin to know what is really important.

We got to see a video of the news report about the crash and it is hard to believe that anyone survived that fireball. More than half the passengers were killed in the crash, many others were seriously injured, but 13 walked away. When the plane hit the ground, the nose dug into the runway and the plane flipped over. It caught fire and the fuselage broke into three pieces. The middle section where Jeff was seated slid off the runway and continued sliding for over a mile into a cornfield where it came to rest. It was upside down and everyone was hanging from the seatbelts. It was Jeff's seatmate who helped him get loose.

Although, he knew the instructions said to take nothing with him in an emergency, as he was making his way toward where he could exit, he saw the Bible he had on the plane and which had the notes for his grandfather's eulogy in it. He grabbed up the Bible and carried it with him. That resulted in his being mistaken for a priest along the way. He reported that he was totally unscathed and walked away looking as if nothing had happened.

As word reached his family in Durango and at his grandfather's funeral that he had been on the flight that crashed so spectacularly, they were told that he had not survived. However, just as his father-in-law was about to break the news to Michele, Jeff was able to reach him by phone. There was a similar experience for his family in Chicago at the funeral home. What he realized in the burning plane was just how fast everything can change and how little control we have over it. He left Durango just thinking about getting back to Chicago and ended up changed forever.

Jeff believes there is a reason he survived and that has an opportunity to do good for others because of that. It is part of why he is an enthusiastic Rotarian working to make a difference in the world. While less than one in a million will ever experience a plane crash, we all experience "plane crashes" of life -- loss of a loved one, an unwelcomed medical diagnosis, and so on. We are not promised anything. When we survive those life crashes, we too are given an opportunity for more, as Jeff was. This opportunity of more carries with it a responsibility to make good use the time we have.

Jeff M led us in the 4-Way Test to close the meeting.