



# "The Downtowner"



KIWANIS CLUB OF ROCHESTER

ROCHESTER, MN.

[www.kiwanisroch.org](http://www.kiwanisroch.org)

December 18, 2017

## Coming Programs

**Dec. 21** Dec. 21 will be Tracy Thompson (or something like that) She is also a resident of Rochester and was married to a Muslim and lived in the middle East for some time. Tracy has spoken to us before and has an interesting story.

**Dec. 28** there is no meeting since all the Kiwanis Clubs in the city are working at the Hockey Festival.



The Circle of Service for December is Mary Tompkins, Linda Hull, Colleen Maddox and Dan Moore. Circle of Service for **January** is Mary Tompkins, Linda Hull, and Bonnie Schultz. (Circles

should send Clare their programs as soon as possible so they can to have them included in the Downtowner.)

**Stay alert for signup opportunities online at [www.kiwanisroch.org](http://www.kiwanisroch.org)**

### Expense Report:

The only activity this period is the continued exp. in paying the Hotel for our space and meals. The income taken at the door covers the meals, but the room and gratuity come out of the treasury.

Speaking of Dues.... We are happy to announce that 100% of dues are now paid. (A little slow, but done! Thanks from the treasurer)



### Regina Mustafa

Mary Tompkins introduced the speaker, Regina Mustafa, who spoke about "Interfaith in Rochester". Her background is a member of City Ethical Practices, the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission, and she received the Mayor's Medal of Honor for 2016. She has lived in Rochester

for 10 years and is a mother of children 5 ½ years and 8 years old. She came from Philadelphia and is legally blind since graduating from Pen State. Regina converted to the Muslim faith for the last half of her life.

Muslims know very little about Americans like a mother of a Muslim child she tutored who asked about a TV program "Sex in the City", if all Americans are the same. She said polls show 6 of 10 Americans do not know any Muslim person, and this is a huge problem with the media worldwide. News stories of terrorism report 86% are tied to Muslims where the FBI reports only 6% of terrorism is tied to Muslims. In Rochester a PB front page article had a sensational headline "Muslims are Victims of Islam" in a ½ page article quoting a so called Christian Minister who was banned in Stewartville for his Muslim bias. Many political actions like the ban on travel from Muslim countries are strategies like Germany in WWII with Jewish faith. Often what is different between faiths is culture and not religious beliefs. The meeting adjourned at 1 PM with many who stayed to ask more questions.

**Per Charlie Graham**





**RCTC Holiday Plant Sale! Poinsettia plants and wreaths.**

**RCTC Horticulture Hours Monday-Thursday 12-5 Friday 8-2**

(Notes from Dec. 14 per Charlie Graham)



David Nelsen opened the meeting at 12:10 followed by the raffle, won by Dick Weltzin. Happy Dollars were given by Mary, Linda, Ron, and Austin. Austin also spoke about our plans with Saints on

Second to retain the same %13.50 cost for lunch next year. He explained the option to meet in the second room next year as we did today. This seemed to be the best choice of all the members. Dan Carlson gave us another nostalgic story that we enjoyed for its brevity. Bill Kalms spoke about Hockey Plans signups and tickets. Adult ticket passes are \$20 and students are \$12, which we are encouraged to buy or sell. Coleen said the "Adopt a Family" for Christmas was well received for our family of a father and four teenage sons. Our club spent \$425 for gifts and Linda donated the wrapping paper and other supplies.

( 2 weeks ago we had a K-Guest, Cindy Kerr. She was introduced as our newest member. Is that true? Somebody let me know so we can include her.)



Last November 26, Black Friday, Hope and I observed our 46th wedding anniversary. When I got the wedding

license I was working in Minneapolis; Hope was in the Bronx. The Rochester wedding location made pre-marital counseling impossible so we skipped that part. We were struggling. My V-W Beatle started in the morning only if I pushed it down an alley and then hopped into the driver's seat and popped the clutch. I was living in a furnished apartment, attending broadcasting school and earning less than \$500 a month. Hope was working in the Bronx on a work visa. She held no nursing license, did not drive, perked only Sanka Instant Coffee and was virtually friendless in Minnesota. A month before the nuptials Hope brought a thousand dollars cash to Minneapolis. We needed to set up housekeeping, find a caterer, buy an easy chair and find a "love nest." Her Filipino ways made her suspicious of bankers and financial institutions. She had never written a check and neither of us had used a credit card. The upshot was all her money went missing en route forcing us to trim our wedding expenses to the bone. Filipino custom calls for the groom's family to pay for the wedding. In America the tradition is reversed. Hope's mother was a public school teacher who was partly paid in live chickens. She owned no home, car, TV and had no phone. She could not afford to come and see who her daughter was marrying. She did, however, furnish Hope's bead laden wedding dress, which arrived by parcel post the night before the ceremony. So how did we manage? We set the wedding date for the day after Thanksgiving assuming that all attendees would be still full of turkey. At the reception we served only wedding cake and nuts as Baptists approved nothing stronger than grape juice. My old roommate shot pictures with the Nikon camera he had bought at the PX in Korea and then gave us the film. Our honeymoon was spent moving our sparse belongings into what Hope called a "no-



bedroom" apartment - Actually an "efficiency apartment" - located at Seven Corners which afforded a beautiful view of the I-35 construction and the future site of the Metrodome. Our honeymoon on Saturday night was taking in the old Frier's Dinner Theater. Once married Hope worked for a temp agency until she passed her Minnesota nursing boards. We bought a used portable TV to watch Hogan's Heroes until the picture tube gave out. Before leaving for the night shift Hope napped in the bathtub while I watched TV. Her five feet one inch frame was a perfect fit unless she rolled over and hit the faucet. Condensation from stir frying froze the glass porch doors open. When I arrived home Hope was beating herself up for trying to thaw the ice with hot water. What she created was "The Zamboni effect" and actually added more ice. I found it amusing, Even then I believed that a good hardware store could solve most marital problems. I bought some de-icer and melted the problem away. We carefully scouted out free events. Sometimes we popped popcorn and economized at home. Good thing they hired her at Saint Marys in Rochester the following September when she was four months pregnant. Better yet they comped the delivery expenses in January. While our wedding was no fifteen thousand dollar extravaganza of today, it was the best Black Friday bargain I ever found. Wish you could have been there. She was regal in that satin, beaded wedding dress and I have the pictures to prove it. Better yet, we didn't have a care in the world.



Who here among us hasn't had a pep talk about honoring the family name? In my case it was: "A Carlson never

gives up or "A Carlson always does his part." Yes, Dad's cousin Vincent did prison time for car theft I think - but for that his legacy was nearly erased from family lore. To my memory we never even exchanged Christmas cards with Vincent. Just before World War I Minnesota's foreign born faced a distinctly nativist tone. "100% Americanism" was the new mantra. These immigrants were expected to renounce their homeland, first language, ethnic celebrations, Bavarian beer and German dancing. Part of this was fueled by the new Ku Klux Klan and the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. The Von Proth family responded by changing their distinctly German name. The "Von" eliminated and the second part was anglicized to P-O-RA-T-H. In those times German businesses and German Lutheran churches often did likewise to avoid unnecessary kickback. Post World War I years were unforgiving. There was drought; home, farms and business foreclosures while stocks fell to pennies on the dollar. Young "Bobby" from that Von Proth heritage opted out of civilian life, joined the Navy and was ordered to Pearl Harbor. He thought his choice was a good one until December 7th when the sky turned black with Japanese Zeros shooting American ships like fish in a barrel. Oddly these fighters were attacking an island populated by a high number of Japanese citizens. Many sailors dared not go topside and once the Zeros had unloaded their payloads, the sailors found themselves entombed below. Many grabbed wrenches or used their boots to bang on pipes to exhort their shipmates to deliver them from sure death. But the fuel tanks were full to the brim. Rescue required torching the ship's infrastructure and the slightest spark could ignite and cause even more carnage. And so the fleet became burial vaults for swabbies. These men would die in the ship's holds and become war casualties without tombstones. It would take over twenty years before, largely through Elvis Presley's charity, a simple memorial platform above the USS Arizona was built.

Even today visitors observe small rainbow droplets of fuel oozing out onto the harbor waters as December 7th continues to live in infamy while the tourists stand in hushed silence - as words simply fail them. Our sailor Bobby arrived home intact, used the G-I Bill to gain a college degree in industrial arts and to become Mister Porath, John Marshall High School's mechanical drawing teacher. Always cheerful, he was generous with his smiles. In my junior high school years I was a locker partner with his son Donny and I attended away football games with Bob Porath and his industrial arts colleagues. When his wife died in the early

1960s I went to her funeral instead of staying home and watching the Major League All-Star Baseball Game. Mom and Dad convinced me that is what a Carlson did. It may have been the first funeral I ever attended. Maybe Bob Porath was the first hero I ever knew. He earned his chops simply by surviving. I'm sure he never considered what he did as heroic. Likely he wondered why, by God's grace, he was spared while others died. I didn't know what a hero was back then. To me a hero was a friend who was a distant relative to Richie Ashburn, the Philadelphia Phillies outfielder. Bob's son Don later taught at John Marshall. I too went into teaching - for several reasons. Partly to uphold the family name, to be useful and maybe because of examples my teachers set while growing up. Surely I admired a man with a nexus to history even if he was a low grade sailor at Pearl Harbor. Yet, I wished that the Von Proths hadn't felt compelled to drop the family name they brought with them to Ellis Island. Now my car is a Honda. Many drive Mitsubishis, oblivious that this was the manufacturer that built the Japanese Zeros that rained munitions down on Pearl Harbor. Indeed Americans have achieved reconciliation with Japan but still we should never forget those sailors who died, many in the flower of their youth - casualties that spent their final hours waiting for help that never came. Some still are trapped below which denied their families a chance for their sons to get an honor guard at their funeral.

Author Daniel Carlson.

(After these serious essays, I'll try to give you something lighter. A little simple wisdom)

### "SIX LITTLE STORIES"

{1}

Once all villagers decided to pray for rain.  
On the day of prayer all the people gathered,  
but only one boy came with an umbrella.

**That's FAITH .**

{2}

When you throw babies in the air,  
they laugh because they know you will catch  
them.

**That's TRUST.**

{3}

Every night we go to bed  
without any assurance of being alive the next  
morning,  
but still we set the alarms to wake up.

**That's HOPE.**

{4}

We plan big things for tomorrow  
in spite of zero knowledge of the future.

**That's CONFIDENCE.**

{5}

We see the world suffering,  
but still we get married and have children.

**That's LOVE.**

{6}

On an old man's shirt was written a sentence  
'I am not 80 years old;  
I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience.'

**That's ATTITUDE.**

Have a happy day and live your life like the six stories.

When I was a child, I thought nap time was punishment. Now it's like a mini-vacation.

**"GOOD FRIENDS ARE THE RARE JEWELS  
OF LIFE...  
DIFFICULT TO FIND AND IMPOSSIBLE TO  
REPLACE!"**