

Club/Civic

The Rotary Report

President Mark Sigler is back in the saddle and led the Rotarians singing America the Beautiful. The Four Way test is a faith cornerstone for Rotarians and was recited, a club ritual. Paradise Church Pastor David Anderson gave the prayer. There were 16 members and two guests in attendance including Cathy Daniels from H-P Products.

Happy Dollars

* Mark opened the Happy Dollars portion of the meeting with "It's good to be back!" Also, he told how his son returned safely from a mission to Guatemala close to where the fire killed over 30 children last week.

* Ken Willet agreed. He said he was happy to be back, too.

* Al Gress informed the membership that radio WHBC's Ron Ponder, who spoke to the club just two weeks ago, was fired from his job. Gress said to watch for a pushback from the community. (Three letters to the editor in today's Repository).

The Business meeting

There was no business discussed during the meeting, but following the meeting Mark talked of holding our June banquet at the MAPS Museum. More discussion on that later.

The Program

Rotarian Cindy Izotic, herself a MAPS volunteer, introduced the program's speaker Reed Kimbill. Kimbill is a retired Army Colonel, and a retired school principal. He is currently the Director of Education for the MAPS Museum. In his introduction, he said as a boy he always wanted to fly, but had bad vision. Instead, he went into the Army and was inducted as a Second Lieutenant. "My job," he explained, "Was shooting down airplanes."



REED KIMBILL

The museum has only two paid employees, but there are over 1,700 volunteers, many former military men and women. There are 50 airplanes on display and special events bring in visits of famous aircraft. Education is a central part of MAPS mission and they do hands-on experiences for younger visitors. Besides the planes, there are displays and memorabilia.

Kimbill began by telling stories of several planes including the very first glider built in Canton by a farmer named Martin. His farm was where Skyland Pines Golf course now sits and older residents will remember Martin Field, an airport that was located across the road from the golf course. It is now a sand and gravel quarry.

In 1908, five years after the Wright Brothers, Martin built the first mono-wing plane. It did not have a motor, but flew as a glider. The plane did not have wheels, but had skis and was pulled by a horse to gain speed for take off. Later, Martin obtained a tractor to pull the plane. His wife Alma was the world's first female pilot. Over time, the Wright Brothers, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone came to Canton to meet with Martin. The museum has Martin's original plane, patched up, restored and hanging in the main hanger.

There is a Sopwith Triplane. A local man bought the plans for the

plane in England and built the one in the museum in his garage. He completed his plane when he was 78 years old and flew it.

There is the venerable C-47 Sky-Train, the primary cargo plane of WWII. The C-47s were designed in 1930 and there are still some flying today. There is a B-26 Marauder, one of only six left in the world. "It was designed and built for warfare," Kimbill explained. The plan, in parts and pieces, were donated to the museum in 1984 and it took volunteers 24 years to restore it, although it is still not totally completed.

Then there is the OQ-2A Radio Plane — the world's first drone. It was made of balsa wood and cloth and was used for gunnery practice in WWII. The story goes that Life Magazine sent a photographer to the factory in California where the plane was built. There was a cute woman working on the assembly line and the photographer took her picture. This was 1944. The woman, with a later name change, was Marilyn Monroe.

There is a F-86 Sabre Jet recovered from a swamp northeast of Akron. This plane won the national air race held in Cleveland in 1949. The F-100 Super Sabre is there along with an A-4 SkyHawk, an attack aircraft used in Vietnam. It later was flown as part of the Blue Angels team and the pilot was a Firestone High School graduate from Akron. There is a F-14 Tomcat and a F-16 Falcon. Various National Guard units are still using that model. One of Kimbill's favorites is a restored B-24 Liberator.

The MAPS Museum is located at 2260 International Parkway west of the Akron-Canton Airport. It is open Tuesday through Sundays. Some planes are inside a hanger, and others are sitting on the tarmac. While there, visit the gift shop. There is an admission fee to the museum.

"History is not made by airplanes," as written in the MAPS brochure titled Aviation Up Close. "But by the men and women who designed, built and flew them." Viewing the Gallery of Heroes while there is a must.