



Waunakee Rotary Club

Sept. 24, 2009
Vol. 43 No. 7

The business world is currently undergoing an ethics revolution, and failure to get on board could cost companies in the long run.

At the Sept. 17 Waunakee Rotary Club meeting, Denis Collins, author of "Essentials of Business Ethics," described how companies that strive to be ethical financially outperform others with less ethical practices.

Denis said two things have fueled the ethics revolution. First, as the world has become democratized, ethical expectations have changed. In a democracy, people have the freedom to denounce what they perceive as an injustice, including members of Congress who shout "you lie" to the President during a national address.

Technology has provided the ability for injustices to be filmed and put on YouTube for the world to see. A few years ago, a disgruntled Dominoes employee was caught on film adding mucus to a pizza, and that captured widespread attention, Denis said. Such publicity has encouraged ethical behavior.

Denis is a cancer survivor. When he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease in 1995, he was told he had until August of 1996 to live. Raised Catholic, he said he initially thought he would face purgatory.

"A deep voice said, 'No. Where do you think you have been for the last 40 years?'" Dennis said.

Denis said he realized then that we all have free will, and we all make mistakes. We are all morally imperfect. But we can take action to recognize that fact and manage our moral imperfections, Denis said.

The costs of unethical operations within a company are most appar-

ent in lawsuits. But unethical treatment of employees can cost a company as well, Denis said. For instance, if a boss who is verbally abusive to his employees, those employees are more likely to steal from the company because they want to get even. Those employees will also be less likely to inform the boss of issues that need to be addressed, Denis said. And employees can direct that abuse at other subordinates or even customers.

Denis' latest book, "Essentials of Business Ethics: How to Create Organizations of High Integrity and Superior Performance," is a practical, how-to guide for companies looking to create best practices.

It provides instruction on hiring ethical employees, applying a code of ethics to the workplace and working through ethical dilemmas.

Denis said the book can help companies in a number of ways.

"As morally imperfect human beings, we are meant to be at our ethical best not just on Sundays but every day," Denis said.

Other news:

- Bill Erickson said the Swedish delegation is coming on Saturday and will be having lunch at Rex's Monday, Sept. 21, at noon. Join them if you'd like.

- Phil Willems said the light sales committee has met. The committee also sampled the new pizza the club will be selling at Waunafest.

- Craig Larson said the golf outing was a good time.

- Harriet Statz asked if anyone in the club with a van or SUV would like to take the Rotary Exchange students to Chicago Sept. 26 to visit the Rotary Yachting Club.

- Mick Holm of Kids Against Hunger spoke about the food pack-

OFFICERS

TOM REIS, PRESIDENT • BRENT ZIEGLER, PRESIDENT ELECT
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • AL DASSOW, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

DAN MUXFELD • JOHN CULLEN • LINDA OLSON

Calendar of Events:

• Sept. 26-27, *Wauktoberfest*

aging event planned for Oct. 4. Kids Against Hunger gathers volunteers to package nutritious meals for the hungry each year. The goal this year is to package 150,000 meals. Each meal is 15 cents, and the organization raises all of the funds for them. The Dane County Community Action Coalition will pick up meals this year to distribute at Dane County's food pantries, Mick said.

Guests: Jim Ableidinger, guest of Mike Ableidinger; Mick Holm, guest of Phil Willems; Becky Ohan and Genna Eaton, guests of Ellen Schaaf; Ben Pechan, guest of Rex Endres; Daren Stewart, guest of Phil Willems; Erik Gammel, guest of Paul Gilbertson; Eric Ballweg, guest of Ron Ballweg.

Visiting Rotarians: None.

Birthdays: Sept. 25, Allan Dassow; Sept. 25, Luke Tierney; Sept. 30, John Cullen.

Anniversaries: Sept. 27, Mike and Heidi Ableidinger; Sept. 28, Peggy and Bob Acker-Farber.

Prayers: Sept. 24, Susan Vergeront; Oct. 1, Leonard Allen; Oct. 8, Pat Durden.

Programs: Sept. 24, Dr. Jim Starling on goiter surgery in Palestine; Oct. 1, club assembly.

Greeters: Sept. 24, Leonard Allen and Bob Arntz; Oct. 1, Ken Ballweg and Roberta Baumann.